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INTERMEDIATE ENGLISH ESSAYS

EDITED AND ANNOTATED

BY

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BLACKIE & SON (INDIA) LIMITED
WARWICK HOUSE, BOMBAY; CALCUTTA AND MADRAS

1935

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Messrs. Chatto & Windus for " Child's Play " and " Walking Tours " from *Virginibus Puerisque and Other Papers* by R. L. Stevenson.

The Clarendon Press for " Might is Right " by Sir Walter Raleigh.

H. G. Wells for " My First Flight ".

Messrs. Methuen & Co. Ltd. for " On Popularity " from *Essays on Life* by A. Clutton-Brock; and *Mr. E. V. Lucas* for " Birds and their Enemies " from *Fireside and Sunshine*, and " A Funeral " from *Character and Comedy*; and *Mr. Robert Lynd* for " The Hum of Insects " from *The Pleasures of Ignorance*.

Messrs. Mills & Boon Ltd. for " On Good Resolutions " from *The Book of This and That* by Robert Lynd.

Messrs. J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd. for " In Praise of Walking " and " On Early Rising " by "Alpha of the Plough"; and an extract from *Speeches and Letters of Abraham Lincoln* by James Bryce.

Messrs. Macmillan & Co. Ltd. and *Sir James G. Frazer* for " A Visit to Coverley Hall " from *The Gorgon's Head*.

Mr. Holbrook Jackson for " Peterpantheism " from *Romance and Reality*.

INTRODUCTION

This volume of representative English essays is intended primarily for students of the Intermediate classes of Indian Colleges and Universities, while it may also serve as a rapid reader for senior schoolboys who contemplate an academic career; but it is hoped that it may appeal more widely to all who value and cherish the Essay in English literature and are interested in its literary development.

The study of the Essay is very necessary for every student, if only from the utilitarian point of view. Not only does he meet it as a constant and familiar feature of all his college examinations, but it figures also quite as regularly in the public competitions for entry into the various services. It is therefore essential that at an early stage of his studies he should find out in what the good essay should consist. This selection of essays of general interest has been chosen with that end in view. A place has been found for characteristic compositions which range from those of Lord Bacon in the seventeenth century to some by contemporary writers of established reputation; and while essays by Steele, Addison, Goldsmith, Dr. Johnson and Lamb, without which no an-

thology could be complete, are included as a matter of course, it has fortunately been found possible to secure a variety of more modern essays of interest and charm.

It is not altogether a simple matter to arrive at a definition of the Essay. One finds applied to it frequently the epithets intimate, personal, human, subjective, sympathetic, as though these alone defined its function and its essence. It has been described—not without some appeal—as “the after-dinner monologue of an interesting and well-informed man”. There are, however, true essays, including many by Bacon, Addison, Goldsmith and Dr. Johnson, as well as some by modern writers like Viscount Bryce and Mr. Clutton-Brock, in which these qualities are not obtrusive, and which, as a matter of fact, attract us for entirely different reasons. It is therefore necessary to revise somewhat this prevailing conception of the Essay as being purely a personal and entirely a subjective literary effusion, a conception obviously inspired by the study of Steele, Lamb, Stevenson and their followers, and to search for a definition of wider and more universal applicability.

One must recognize, it would seem, two aspects of the Essay: its matter, and its form. For example, the reader may be attracted chiefly by the shrewd worldly wisdom of Lord Bacon, or he may find, as so many have done, an irresistible appeal in the depth of thought and sincerity of the *Spectator* essays of Addison; as has been said above, it is the personal note with the strong chord of human sympathy which gives deserved popularity to the essays of Steele, Goldsmith, Washington Irving, Stevenson, Mr. Lucas, Mr. Lynd and Alpha of the Plough;

but the attraction may be elsewhere, in, for instance, the sturdy commonsense and uprightness of Dr. Johnson, in Charles Lamb's whimsical humour and originality, in the love of nature, of the open-air, of the romance in life, which Stevenson betrays in his pages, or in the trenchant and compelling logic of Professor Sir Walter Raleigh.

There is no less variety in the form than in the matter. One may be fascinated by the brilliance and epigrammatic brevity of Lord Bacon, the lucid simplicity of Steele, the more formal literary style of Addison and Goldsmith, expanding into the somewhat ponderous harmonies of Doctor Johnson, the sparkle of Robert Louis Stevenson or the easy expressiveness of Raleigh, the somewhat journalistic appeal of Mr. H. G. Wells or the cultured freshness of Mr. Clutton-Brock.

Confronted with this embarrassing richness, which extends naturally enough to the subjects of the essays, one is perhaps well-advised to have recourse to the commonsense perspicuity of Dr. Johnson's definition of the Essay as "a loose sally of the mind", since in matters literary which concerned reason and not æsthetics the sturdy Doctor's opinions were usually sound. A "sally of the mind" seems to imply suddenness, absence of premeditation and lengthy preparation, something of the unexpected, dependence upon the moment's initiative, readiness to take what chances, to accept what may turn up, to follow where fortune leads, lack of a definite plan of campaign, liberty of thought; while the adjective "loose" merely emphasizes still further the absence of a carefully thought-out plan of campaign. Care is expended rather upon the expression than the subject-

matter; and so the Essay appears to be the careful and if possible stylish expression of the rather unstudied and unpremeditated thoughts upon a subject which come into your mind as you write.

INTERMEDIATE ESSAYS

No. 1.—Of Travel

FRANCIS BACON

Francis Bacon, who became Lord Verulam and Viscount St. Albans, was born in 1561. His father was Keeper of the Great Seal under Queen Elizabeth, and a cousin was her famous minister, Robert Cecil. After leaving Trinity College, Cambridge, Bacon was called to the Bar in 1582, entering Parliament two years later. He attached himself to the Queen's wayward favourite, Essex, and has never been quite forgiven for his subsequent action in leading the prosecution against that unfortunate noble. Under King James I, Bacon became Attorney-General and in 1618 Chancellor. In 1621 he pled guilty to bribery, was disgraced, and spent his remaining years in literary pursuits, dying in 1626.

His first important work was the *Essays*. The first edition in 1597 contained only ten essays; but Bacon kept adding to their number, and the final edition of 1625 contained fifty-eight. His scientific works include *The Advancement of Learning* (1605), and the *Novum Organum* (1620). The other writings comprise his *History of Henry VII*, and the *New Atlantis*, besides numerous Latin tracts.

Bacon's personality does not endear him to mankind. The *Essays*, upon which his fame chiefly rests, are brilliant but hard and utilitarian like their author, as may be seen in the two examples included. Their language is simple, but of course rather archaic occasionally. The style is coloured by figures of

speech, antithesis and climax, while the thought is always clear and brief. Entirely deficient in humour, he does not expand upon the pleasures of travel and the beauties of Nature to be visited, but is consistently material and utilitarian, choosing the benefits accruing, and even referring to unpleasant things which should be avoided. A cynical outlook on life is visible in the *Essays*.

Travel, in the younger sort,¹ is a part of education; in the elder, a part of experience.

He that travelleth² into a country before he hath some entrance into the language, goeth to school, and not to travel.

That young men travel under some tutor or grave servant, I allow well;³ so that⁴ he be such a one that hath the language and hath been in the country before, whereby he may be able to tell them what things are worthy to be seen in the country where they go, what acquaintances they are to seek, what exercises or discipline⁵ the place yieldeth. For else⁶ young men shall go hooded,⁷ and look abroad⁸ little.

It is a strange thing that in sea-voyages, where there is nothing to be seen but sky and sea, men should make diaries; but in land-travel, wherein so much is to be observed, for the most part they omit it, as if chance were fitter to be registered than observation. Let diaries therefore be brought in use.

The things to be seen and observed are: the courts of princes, especially when they give audience to ambassadors; the courts of justice, while they sit and hear causes; and so of consistories ecclesiastic;⁹ the churches and monasteries, with the monuments therein extant; the walls and fortifications of cities and towns, and so the

havens and harbours; antiquities and ruins; libraries, colleges, disputations,¹⁰ and lectures, where any are; shipping and navies; houses and gardens of state¹¹ and pleasure near great cities; armories, arsenals, magazines, exchanges, burses,¹² warehouses, exercises of horsemanship, fencing, training of soldiers and the like; comedies, such whereunto the better sort of persons do resort; treasuries of jewels and robes, cabinets¹³ and rarities; and, to conclude, whatever is memorable in the places where they go: after all which¹⁴ the tutors or servants ought to make diligent inquiry. As for triumphs,¹⁵ masks, feasts, weddings, funerals, capital executions, and such shows, men need not so be put in mind of them; yet they are not to be neglected.

If you will have a young man to put his travel into a little room,¹⁶ and in short time to gather much, this you must do: first, as was said, he must have some entrance into the language before he goeth. Then he must have such a servant or tutor as knoweth the country, as was likewise said. Let him carry with him also some card¹⁷ or book describing the country where he travelleth, which will be a good key to his inquiry. Let him keep also a diary.

Let him not stay long in one city or town; more or less as the place deserveth, but not long. Nay, when he stayeth in one city or town, let him change his lodging from one end and part of the town to another, which is a great adamant¹⁸ of acquaintance. Let him sequester¹⁹ himself from the company of his countrymen, and diet²⁰ in such places where there is good company of the nation where he travelleth.

Let him, upon his removes from one place to another, procure recommendation to some person of quality residing in the place whither he removeth, that he may use his favour in those things he desireth to see or know. Thus he may abridge his travel with much profit.

As for acquaintance which is to be sought in travel, that which is most of all profitable is acquaintance with the secretaries and employed men ²¹ of ambassadors; for so in travelling in one country he shall suck the experience of many. Let him also see and visit eminent persons in all kinds which are of great name abroad, that he may be able to tell how the life agreeth with the fame.

For quarrels, ²² they are with care and discretion to be avoided. They are commonly for mistresses, healths, ²³ place, ²⁴ and words. And let a man beware how he keepeth company with cholerick and quarrelsome persons, for they will engage him into their own quarrels.

When a traveller returneth home, let him not leave the countries where he hath travelled altogether behind him, but maintain a correspondence by letters with those of his acquaintance which are of most worth. And let his travel appear rather in his discourse than in his apparel or gesture; and in his discourse let him rather be advised ²⁵ in his answers than forward to tell stories. And let it appear that he doth not change his country manners for those of foreign parts, but only prick in ²⁶ some flowers of that he hath learned abroad, into the customs of his own country.

NOTES

1. *the younger sort*, young people.
2. *travelleth*. Note the archaic form, not used to-day.
3. *allow well*, approve.
4. *so that*, provided that.
5. *exercises or discipline*, regular instruction. Bacon's outlook is utilitarian.
6. *For else*, otherwise.
7. *go hooded*, be unable to see. A popular Elizabethan metaphor from the sport of hawking.
8. *abroad*, around.
9. *consistories ecclesiastic*, church courts. Note the place of the adjective after the noun, as is the habit in French.
10. *disputations*, learned debates.
11. *gardens of state*. The wilder beauties of Nature, beloved by such as Wordsworth and Byron, had no particular appeal either to Bacon or to Elizabethans generally.
12. *burses*, the French "Bourse"; merchants' exchanges.
13. *cabinets*, museums.
14. *after all which*, concerning all the above.
15. *triumphs*, shows and pageants.
16. *a little room*, i.e. pack his experiences into a brief tour.
17. *card*, map.
18. *adamant*, magnet.
19. *sequester*, keep away from.
20. *diet*, take his meals.
21. *employed men*, diplomatic attachés.
22. *quarrels*. Cf. the advice of worldly-wise Polonius to Laertes who is going on his travels (*Hamlet*, i. iii. 65).
23. *healths*, i.e. being forced to drink healths.
24. *place*, precedence.
25. *advised*, judicious.
26. *prick in*, plant. A metaphor from gardening.

No. 2.—Of Studies

FRANCIS BACON

Studies serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability.¹ Their chief use for delight is in privateness and retiring; for ornament, is in discourse; and for ability, is in the judgment and disposition of business. For expert ² men can execute, and perhaps judge of particulars, one by one; but the general counsels, and the plots ³ and marshalling of affairs, come best from those that are learned. To spend too much time in studies is sloth; to use them too much for ornament, is affectation; to make judgment wholly by their rules, is the humour ⁴ of a scholar. They perfect nature, and are perfected by experience: for natural abilities are like natural plants,⁵ that need pruning by study; and studies themselves do give forth directions too much at large,⁶ except they be bounded in ⁷ by experience. Crafty ⁸ men contemn studies, simple men admire them, and wise men use them; for they teach not their own use; but that is a wisdom without ⁹ them, and above them, won by observation. Read not to contradict and confute; nor to believe and take for granted; nor to find talk ¹⁰ and discourse; but to weigh and consider. Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed,¹¹ and some few to be chewed and digested; that is, some books

are to be read only in parts; others to be read, but not curiously;¹² and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention. Some books also may be read by deputy, and extracts made of them by others; but that would be only in the less important arguments, and the meaner sort of books; else distilled¹³ books are like common distilled waters, flashy¹⁴ things. Reading makes a full man;¹⁵ conference¹⁶ a ready man; and writing an exact man. And therefore, if a man write little, he had need have a great memory; if he confer little, he had need have a present wit;¹⁷ and if he read little, he had need have much cunning,¹⁸ to seem to know what he doth not. Histories make men wise; poets witty; the mathematics subtle; natural philosophy deep; moral¹⁹ grave; logic and rhetoric able to contend.²⁰ *Abeunt studia in mores.*²¹ Nay there is no stond²² or impediment in the wit but may be wrought out by fit studies; like as diseases of the body may have appropriate exercises. Bowling²³ is good for the stone and reins;²⁴ shooting for the lungs and breast; gentle walking for the stomach; riding for the head; and the like. So if a man's wit be wandering, let him study the mathematics; for in demonstrations, if his wit be called away ever so little, he must begin again. If his wit be not apt to distinguish or find differences, let him study the Schoolmen;²⁵ for they are *cymini sectores*.²⁶ If he be not apt to beat over²⁷ matters, and to call up one thing to prove and illustrate another, let him study the lawyers' cases. So every defect of the mind may have a special receipt.²⁸

NOTES

1. *ability*, i.e. to develop the mental powers.
2. *expert*, practical.
3. *plots*, the thinking out.
4. *humour*, characteristic.
5. *like plants*. Another metaphor from gardening. Cf. Shakespeare's use of this same figure.
6. *directions too much at large*, very general ideas.
7. *bounded in*, corrected.
8. *Crafty*, clever. An example of a word the meaning of which has degenerated since the sixteenth century.
9. *without*, outside.
10. *find talk*, acquire subjects for conversation with the idea of "showing off".
11. *tasted, swallowed*. Note again the figurative language.
12. *curiously*, with excessive care.
13. *distilled*. An extremely vivid metaphor.
14. *flashy*, tasteless.
15. *Reading makes a full man*. Note the manner in which the sentence is built up, adding to the brilliance of the expression. There are other examples in this Essay.
16. *conference*, conversation.
17. *a present wit*, a ready mind.
18. *cunning*. This word bears its modern meaning; frequently it meant merely "knowing".
19. *moral*, moral philosophy.
20. *contend*, argue in debate.
21. *Abeunt . . .*, Studies influence character (Ovid, *Heroides*, XV, 83).
22. *stond*, obstacle; an example of a word which has not survived to modern times.
23. *Bowling*, the game of bowls.
24. *reins*, kidneys.
25. *the Schoolmen*, the mediæval philosophers.
26. *cymini sectores*, splitters of hairs (literally, "cutters of cummin-seeds").
27. *beat over*, examine closely.
28. *receipt*, recipe; an appropriate medicine.

No. 3.—Spectator No. 2

SIR RICHARD STEELE

Steele was born in Dublin, Ireland, in 1672. He was educated at Charterhouse, where he met Addison, and at Oxford. He left before taking his degree, and joined the army in 1694. His earliest works were his *Christian Hero*, a work of military devotion, and *The Funeral*, a comedy. In 1707 he became editor of the official Gazette. The *Tatler* was founded in 1709, appearing thrice weekly, and containing news, gossip, correspondence, and charming essays. Of these last Steele wrote 188, Addison 42, while they collaborated in most of the others. Swift was an infrequent contributor. The *Tatler* appeared for the last time in January, 1711, and was succeeded in March of the same year by the more celebrated *Spectator*. The *Guardian* came later. Of his other writings the chief are comedies, such as *The Tender Husband* and *The Conscious Lovers*. He died in 1729.

The style of Steele is in almost complete contrast to Bacon's. More modern by a century, it is correspondingly freer from archaisms and obsolete turns of expression. No dependence is placed upon the aphoristic style which makes Bacon's essays a collection of maxims; antithesis and climax are seldom used. Not brilliant but easy, Steele's style reflects his character. For Bacon's materialism he substitutes sentiment, pathos, and human sympathy; and he has the saving grace of humour.

Steele's fame rests upon the *Tatler* and *Spectator* essays, and most of all upon the charming character creations known as the Spectator Club.

Ast alii sex

Et plures uno conclamant ore (Juvenal).

Six more at least join their consenting voice.

The first of our society is a gentleman of Worcester-shire, of ancient descent, a Baronet, his name Sir Roger de Coverley.¹ His great-grandfather was inventor of that famous country-dance ² which is called after him. All who know that shire are very well acquainted with the parts ³ and merits of Sir Roger. He is a gentleman who is very singular in his behaviour, but his singularities proceed from his good sense, and are contradictions to the manners of the world, only as he thinks the world is in the wrong. However this humour creates him no enemies, for he does nothing with sourness or obstinacy; and his being unconfined to modes and forms, makes him but the readier and more capable to please and oblige all who know him. When he is in town, he lives in Soho Square.⁴ It is said he keeps himself a bachelor by reason he was crossed in love by a perverse beautiful widow of the next county to him. Before this disappointment, Sir Roger was what you call a Fine Gentleman, had often supped with my Lord Rochester ⁵ and Sir George Etherege,⁶ fought a duel upon his first coming to town, and kicked Bully Dawson ⁷ in a public coffee-house for calling him youngster. But being ill-used by the above-mentioned widow, he was very serious for a year and a half; and though, his temper being naturally jovial, he at last got over it, he grew careless of himself, and never dressed ⁸ afterwards. He continues to wear a coat and doublet ⁹ of the same cut as were in fashion at the time of his repulse,

which, in his merry humours,¹⁰ he tells us, has been in and out ¹¹ twelve times since he first wore it. He is now in his fifty-sixth year, cheerful, gay, and hearty; keeps a good house both in town and country; a great lover of mankind; but there is such a mirthful cast in his behaviour, that he is rather beloved than esteemed. His tenants grow rich, his servants look satisfied, all the young women profess love to him, and the young men are glad of his company. When he comes into a house he calls the servants by their names, and talks all the way upstairs ¹² to a visit. I must not omit, that Sir Roger is a justice of the *Quorum*; ¹³ that he fills the chair at a quarter-session with great abilities, and three months ago gained universal applause by explaining a passage ¹⁴ in the game-act.

The gentleman next in esteem and authority among us is another bachelor, who is a member of the Inner Temple; ¹⁵ a man of great probity, wit, and understanding; but he has chosen his place of residence rather to obey the direction of an old humoursome ¹⁶ father, than in pursuit of his own inclinations. He was placed there to study the laws of the land, and is the most learned of any of the house ¹⁷ in those of the stage. Aristotle and Longinus ¹⁸ are much better understood by him than Littleton ¹⁹ or Coke.²⁰ The father sends up every post questions relating to marriage-articles, leases, and tenures, in the neighbourhood; all which questions he agrees with an attorney ²¹ to answer and take care of in the lump. He is studying the passions ²² themselves, when he should be inquiring into the debates among men which arise from them. He knows the argument of each of the orations of Demosthenes ²³ and Tully,²⁴ but not one case in the reports of our

own courts. No one ever took him for a fool, but none, except his intimate friends, know he has a great deal of wit. This turn makes him at once both disinterested and agreeable. As few of his thoughts are drawn from business,²⁵ they are most of them fit for conversation. His taste of books is a little too just²⁶ for the age he lives in; he has read all, but approves of very few. His familiarity with the customs, manners, actions, and writings of the ancients, makes him a very delicate observer of what occurs to him in the present world. He is an excellent critic, and the time of the play is his hour of business; exactly at five he passes through New-Inn,²⁷ crosses through Russel-Court,²⁸ and takes a turn at Will's²⁹ until the play begins; he has his shoes rubbed and his periwig³⁰ powdered at the barber's as you go into the Rose.³¹ It is for the good of the audience when he is at a play, for the actors have an ambition to please him.

The person of next consideration is Sir Andrew Freeport,³² a merchant of great eminence in the city of London. A person of indefatigable industry, strong reason, and great experience. His notions of trade are noble and generous, and (as every rich man has usually some sly way of jesting, which would make no great figure³³ were he not a rich man) he calls the sea the British Common.³⁴ He is acquainted with commerce in all its parts, and will tell you that it is a stupid and barbarous way to extend dominion by arms;³⁵ for true power is to be got by arts and industry.³⁶ He will often argue, that if this part of our trade were well cultivated, we should gain from one nation; and if another, from another. I have heard him prove, that diligence makes more lasting acquisitions than

valour, and that sloth has ruined more nations than the sword. He abounds in several frugal maxims, amongst which the greatest favourite is, "A penny saved is a penny got". A general trader of good sense is pleasanter company than a general scholar; and Sir Andrew having a natural unaffected eloquence, the perspicuity of his discourse gives the same pleasure as wit would in another man. He has made his fortunes himself; and says that England may be richer than other kingdoms, by as plain methods as he himself is richer than other men; though, at the same time, I can say this of him, that there is not a point in the compass ³⁷ but blows home a ship in which he is an owner.

Next to Sir Andrew in the club-room sits Captain Sentry, a gentleman of great courage, good understanding, but invincible modesty.³⁸ He is one of those that deserve very well, but are very awkward at putting their talents within the observation of such as should take notice of them. He was some years a captain, and behaved himself with great gallantry in several engagements, and at several sieges; but having a small estate of his own, and being next heir to Sir Roger, he has quitted a way of life in which no man can rise suitably to his merit, who is not something of a courtier, as well as a soldier. I have heard him often lament, that in a profession where merit is placed in so conspicuous a view, impudence ³⁹ should get the better of modesty. When he has talked to this purpose, I never heard him make a sour expression, but frankly confess that he left the world ⁴⁰ because he was not fit for it. A strict honesty and an even regular behaviour, are in themselves obstacles to him that must press through

crowds,⁴¹ who endeavour at the same end with himself, the favour of a commander. He will however, in his way of talk, excuse generals, for not disposing⁴² according to men's desert, or inquiring into it. For, says he, that great man who has a mind to help me, has as many to break through to come at me, as I have to come at him. Therefore he will conclude, that the man who would make a figure,⁴³ especially in a military way, must get over all false modesty, and assist his patron against the importunity of other pretenders, by a proper assurance in his own vindication.⁴⁴ He says it is a civil cowardice to be backward in asserting what you ought to expect, as it is a military fear to be slow in attacking when it is your duty. With this candour does the gentleman speak of himself and others. The same frankness runs through all his conversation. The military part of his life has furnished him with many adventures, in the relation of which he is very agreeable to the company; for he is never overbearing, though accustomed to command men in the utmost degree below him; nor ever too obsequious, from a habit of obeying men highly above him.

But, that our society may not appear a set of humourists,⁴⁵ unacquainted with the gallantries⁴⁶ and pleasures of the age, we have among us the gallant Will Honeycomb, a gentleman who, according to his years, should be in the decline of his life, but having ever been very careful of his person, and always had a very easy fortune,⁴⁷ time has made but a very little impression, either by wrinkles on his forehead, or traces in his brain.⁴⁸ His person is well-turned,⁴⁹ of a good height. He is very ready at that sort of discourse with which men usually entertain women. He

has all his life dressed very well, and remembers habits ⁵⁰ as others do men. He can smile when one speaks to him, and laughs easily.⁵¹ He knows the history of every mode, and can inform you from which of the French court ladies our wives and daughters had this manner of curling their hair, that way of placing their hoods, and whose vanity, to show her foot, made that part of the dress so short in such a year. In a word, all his conversation and knowledge have been in the female world. As other men of his age will take notice to you what such a minister said upon such and such an occasion, he will tell you when the Duke of Monmouth ⁵² danced at court, such a woman was then smitten,⁵³ another was taken ⁵⁴ with him at the head of his troop in the Park. In all these important relations,⁵⁵ he has ever about the same time received a kind glance or a blow of a fan from some celebrated beauty, mother of the present Lord Such-a-one. If you speak of a young commoner who said a lively thing in the House, he starts up, "He has good blood in his veins, Tom Mirabell begot him, that rogue cheated me in that affair; that young fellow's mother used me more like a dog than any woman I ever made advances to". This way of talking of his very much enlivens the conversation among us of a more sedate turn; and I find there is not one of the company, but myself, who rarely speak at all, but speaks of him as of that sort of man who is usually called a well-bred Fine Gentleman. To conclude his character, where women are not concerned, he is an honest worthy man.

I cannot tell whether I am to account him whom I am next to speak of, as one of our company; for he visits us

but seldom, but, when 'he does, it adds to every man else ⁵⁶ a new enjoyment of himself. He is a clergyman, a very philosophic man, of general learning, great sanctity of life, and the most exact good breeding. He has the misfortune to be of a very weak constitution, and consequently cannot accept of such cares and business as preferments in his function ⁵⁷ would oblige him to. He is therefore among divines what a chamber-councillor ⁵⁸ is among lawyers. The probity of his mind, and the integrity of his life, create him followers, as being eloquent or loud advances others. He seldom introduces the subject he speaks upon; but we are so far gone ⁵⁹ in years, that he observes when he is among us, an earnestness to have him fall on ⁶⁰ some divine topic, which he always treats with much authority, as one who has no interests in this world, as one who is hastening to the object of all his wishes, and conceives hope from his decays and infirmities. These are my ordinary companions.

NOTES

1. *Sir Roger de Coverley*. The name, suggested by Swift, is that of an old country-dance, and therefore typically English.

2. *country-dance*, in which the performers are arranged in two opposite lines (French, "contre"), one of men and the other of women. One of the charms of the dance is that the dancers meet one another freely during its progress. This particular dance originated in the reign of Richard I.

3. *parts*, qualities, capacities.

4. *Soho Square*, lying to the south of Oxford Street, and in Steele's day a fashionable place of residence.

5. *Lord Rochester*, poet, wit and man of fashion of the Restoration.

6. *Etherege*, author of several comedies, and Rochester's companion in dissipation.

7. *Bully Dawson*, a notorious ruffian of the time.

8. *never dressed*, i.e. never dressed fashionably.

9. *doublet*, a coat reaching just below the waist.
10. *humours*, moods.
11. *in and out*, it has been in fashion and out of fashion
12. *talks all the way upstairs*, to the servant ushering him up.
13. *Quorum*, bench of magistrates. It is really a Latin word meaning "of whom", which occurred frequently in their commission of appointment.
14. *explaining a passage*, an example of Steele's humour
15. *the Inner Temple*, one of the Inns of Court in London, to one of which all barristers belong. It is so called because it belonged originally to the Knights Templars.
16. *humoursome*, whimsical, capricious.
17. *the house*, the Inner Temple. The unexpectedness of the statement in this sentence is another example of Steele's humour.
18. *Aristotle, Longinus*. The *Poetics* of Aristotle and the *Essay on the Sublime*, by Longinus, both Greeks, are the foundation of literary criticism.
19. *Littleton*, a fifteenth-century writer on Tenures.
20. *Coke*, a famous Chief Justice of England in the seventeenth century. He wrote a commentary on Littleton's work.
21. *an attorney*, who for a fixed fee has agreed to reply to all the questions sent.
22. *the passions*, as revealed in drama, where emotions are depicted.
23. *Demosthenes*, celebrated Greek orator of the fourth century B.C.
24. *Tully*, now known as Cicero, Roman orator of the first century B.C.
25. *business*, his profession of the law; or, in the modern expression, "shop".
26. *too just*, too fastidious.
27. *New-Inn*, a square near the Inner Temple.
28. *Russel-Court*, a narrow street in the same neighbourhood.
29. *Will's*, the famous coffee-house and club of the time.
30. *periwig*, the elaborate wig introduced at the Restoration.
31. *the Rose*, a tavern near Covent Garden frequented by actors.
32. *Freeport*. It is a pleasant exercise of most creators of characters to invent suitable names for them.
33. *make no great figure*, receive little attention.
34. *Common*, which corresponds to the town "maidan". The British think of the sea as villagers think of their maidan.
35. *dominion by arms*. Steele's view, while characteristic of him, seems very modern.
36. *arts and industry*. The modern phrase is "peaceful penetration".
37. *a point in the compass*, i.e. he has ships trading in every part of the globe.

38. *invincible modesty*, one of the jewelled expressions which has become general property. The great writer is he who finds the "inevitable word".

39. *impudence*, pushing oneself forward.

40. *left the world*, quitted public life, retired into private life.

41. *press through crowds*, holds his place with rivals in his profession.

42. *disposing*, i.e. making appointments, conferring promotion.

43. *make a figure*, succeed.

44. *in his own vindication*, in pushing his own claims.

45. *humourists*, eccentrics, oddities.

46. *gallantries*, fashions and behaviour of high society.

47. *easy fortune*, comfortable fortune.

48. *traces in his brain*. An example of Steele's wit. Experience of life has not brought wisdom.

49. *well-turned*, he had a handsome figure.

50. *habits*, clothes.

51. *laughs easily*, and so a little emptily.

52. *Duke of Monmouth*, the handsome natural son of Charles II, who was ultimately executed by James II for pretending to the crown.

53. *smitten*, by his beauty.

54. *taken*, fell in love with him.

55. *relations*, narratives.

56. *every man else*, every other person. Steele's phrase is now obsolete.

57. *preferments in his function*, higher posts in his profession.

58. *chamber-councillor*, a consulting lawyer, giving his opinions privately, but not appearing in court.

59. *so far gone*, so advanced; i.e. preferring serious discourse.

60. *fall on*, discuss.

No. 4.—Spectator No. 122

JOSEPH ADDISON

Addison, born in the same year as Steele, was educated at the same school and the same university, becoming a Fellow of Magdalen College. In 1699 he obtained a travelling scholarship and toured Europe. In 1703 appeared the *Campaign*, a poem in praise of the Duke of Marlborough's victory at Blenheim, which secured for the poet an Under-secretaryship of State. His tragedy *Cato* appeared in 1713. His place in literature rests, however, upon his association with Steele in the *Tatler* and *Spectator*. He died in 1719.

While Steele supplied the sentiment, the pathos, and the other characteristics associated with his exuberant spirit, Addison contributed the ballast, so to speak. His are the literary criticisms, e.g. on Milton, where he dictated English opinion on that neglected genius; and on *Chevy Chase*, a favourite ballad of the people, which gave him particular delight. Steele was full of projects and fertile in invention; Addison was the greater artist, with a balanced and shapely style, deeper in thought and judgment. He was in very truth the *Spectator* of the essays; and he succeeded admirably in his chief object: to bring "philosophy out of libraries, schools and colleges, to dwell in clubs and assemblies; at tea-tables and in coffee-houses": to produce "such writings as tend to the wearing out of ignorance, passion and prejudice".

Comes jucundus in via pro vehiculo est.

An agreeable companion upon the road is as good as a coach.

A man's first care should be to avoid the reproaches of his own heart; his next, to escape the censures of the

world. If the last interferes with the former, it ought to be entirely neglected; but otherwise there cannot be a greater satisfaction to an honest mind, than to see those approbations ¹ which it gives itself seconded by the applause of the public. A man is more sure of his conduct when the verdict he passes upon his own behaviour is thus warranted and confirmed by the opinion of all that know him.

My worthy friend Sir Roger is one of those who is not only at peace within himself, but beloved and esteemed by all about him. He receives a suitable tribute for his universal benevolence to mankind, in the returns of affection and good-will which are paid to him by every one who lives within his neighbourhood. I lately met with two or three odd instances of that general respect which is shown to the good old Knight. He would needs carry Will Wimble and myself with him to the country assizes. As we were upon the road Will Wimble joined a couple of plain men who rode before us, and conversed with them for some time; during which my friend Sir Roger acquainted me with their characters.

"The first of them," says he, "that has a spaniel by his side, is a yeoman of about an hundred pounds a year, an honest man. He is just within the game-act,² and qualified to kill a hare or a pheasant. He knocks down a dinner with his gun twice or thrice a week, and by that means lives much cheaper than those who have not so good an estate as himself. He would be a good neighbour if he did not destroy so many partridges. In short, he is a very sensible man; shoots flying; and has been several times foreman of the petty-jury.

“The other that rides along with him is Tom Touchy,³ a fellow famous for taking the law⁴ of everybody. There is not one in the town where he lives that he has not sued at the quarter-sessions. The rogue had once the impudence to go to law with the widow.⁵ His head is full of costs, damages, and ejectments. He plagued a couple of honest gentlemen so long for a trespass in breaking one of his hedges, that he was forced to sell the ground it enclosed to defray the charges of the prosecution. His father left him fourscore pounds a year; but he has cast and been cast⁶ so often that he is not now worth thirty. I suppose he is going upon the old business⁷ of the willow-tree.”

As Sir Roger was giving me this account of Tom Touchy, Will Wimble and his two companions stopped short till we came up to them. After having paid their respects to Sir Roger, Will told him that Mr. Touchy and he must appeal to him upon a dispute that arose between them. Will it seems had been giving his fellow-traveller an account of his angling one day in such a hole;⁸ when Tom Touchy, instead of hearing out his story, told him that Mr. Such-a-one, if he pleased, might take the law of him for fishing in that part of the river. My friend Sir Roger heard them both, upon a round trot;⁹ and after having paused some time told them, with the air of a man who would not give his judgment rashly, that much might be said on both sides.¹⁰ They were neither of them dissatisfied with the Knight's determination, because neither of them found himself in the wrong by it. Upon which we made the best of our way¹¹ to the assizes.

The court was set before Sir Roger came; but notwithstanding all the justices had taken their places upon

the bench, they made room for the old Knight at the head of them; who for his reputation ¹² in the county took occasion to whisper in the judge's ear, *That he was glad his Lordship had met with so much good weather in his circuit.* I was listening to the proceedings of the court with much attention, and infinitely pleased with that great appearance and solemnity ¹³ which so properly accompanies such a public administration of our laws; when, after about an hour's sitting, I observed to my great surprise, in the midst of a trial, that my friend Sir Roger was getting up to speak. I was in some pain for him,¹⁴ till I found he had acquitted himself of two or three sentences, with a look of much business and great intrepidity.

Upon his first rising the court was hushed, and a general whisper ran among the country people, that Sir Roger *was up*. The speech he made was so little to the purpose, that I shall not trouble my readers with an account of it, and I believe was not so much designed by the Knight himself to inform the court, as to give him a figure in my eye, and keep up his credit in the country.

I was highly delighted, when the court rose, to see the gentlemen of the country gathering about my old friend and striving who should compliment him most; at the same time that the ordinary people gazed upon him at a distance, not a little admiring his courage, that was not afraid to speak to the judge.

In our return home we met with a very odd accident; which I cannot forbear relating, because it shows how desirous all who know Sir Roger are of giving him marks of their esteem. When we were arrived upon the verge of his estate, we stopped at a little inn to rest ourselves

and our horses. The man of the house¹⁵ had it seems been formerly a servant in the Knight's family; and to do honour to his old master, had some time since, unknown to Sir Roger, put him up in a signpost before the door; so that *The Knight's Head* had hung out upon the road about a week before he himself knew any thing of the matter. As soon as Sir Roger was acquainted with it, finding that his servant's indiscretion proceeded wholly from affection and good-will, he only told him that he had made him too high a compliment; and when the fellow seemed to think that could hardly be, added with a more decisive look, that it was too great an honour for any man under¹⁶ a duke; but told him at the same time, that it might be altered with a very few touches, and that he himself would be at the charge¹⁷ of it. Accordingly they got a painter by the Knight's directions to add a pair of whiskers to the face, and by a little aggravation¹⁸ of the features to change it into *The Saracen's Head*. I should not have known this story had not the inn-keeper, upon Sir Roger's alighting, told him in my hearing, that his honour's head was brought back last night with the alterations that he had ordered to be made in it. Upon this my friend, with his usual cheerfulness, related the particulars above-mentioned, and ordered the head to be brought into the room. I could not forbear discovering¹⁹ greater expressions of mirth than ordinary upon the appearance of this monstrous face, under which, notwithstanding it was made to frown and stare in a most extraordinary manner, I could still discover a distant resemblance to my old friend. Sir Roger upon seeing me laugh, desired me to tell him truly whether I thought it

possible for people to know him in that disguise. I at first kept my usual silence; but upon the Knight's conjuring me ²⁰ to tell him whether it was not still more like himself than a Saracen, I composed my countenance in the best manner I could, and replied, *that much might be said on both sides*.

These several adventures, with the Knight's behaviour in them, gave me as pleasant a day as ever I met with in any of my travels.

NOTES

1. *approbations*, applauses; not now used in the plural.
2. *within the game-act*. Possessing land to the value of a hundred pounds or thereabouts, he could take out a licence to kill game.
3. *Touchy*, implying his sensitive temperament.
4. *taking the law*, going to law with.
5. *the widow*, Sir Roger's "perverse beautiful widow" of the previous essay.
6. *cast and been cast*, defeated and been defeated in law-suits.
7. *old business*, old case.
8. *in such a hole*, in a certain hole.
9. *round trot*, trotting quickly.
10. *much might be said*, a phrase characteristic of the old Knight, revealing his simplicity and wide tolerance and respect for other people's opinions.
11. *made the best of our way*, made what haste we might.
12. *for his reputation*, to maintain his reputation (by appearing to be on familiar terms with the judge).
13. *appearance and solemnity*, the dignified ceremonial of an English court. This is the deeper note of Addison.
14. *in some pain for him*, worried as to how he should acquit himself.
15. *man of the house*, innkeeper.
16. *under*, of lower rank than.
17. *at the charge*, he would defray the cost.
18. *aggravation*, adding a few touches to minimize the likeness.
19. *discovering*, displaying.
20. *conjuring me*, urging me very earnestly.

No. 5.—The Vision of Mirzah

JOSEPH ADDISON

This essay appeared as No. 159 of the *Spectator*, and reveals Addison's play of fancy and imagination, depth and sincerity of thought, and desire lightly to inculcate moral teaching. The style is clear, but, as befits the matter, slightly rhetorical.

The idea of such a Vision recurs in Steele's *Conscious Lovers*, I, 2: "These moral writers practise virtue after death: this charming *Vision of Mirza*! Such an author consulted in a morning sets the spirit for the vicissitudes of the day, better than the glass does a man's person."

When I was at Grand Cairo ¹ I picked up several Oriental manuscripts, which I have still by me. Among others, I met with one, entitled *The Visions of Mirzah*, which I have read over with great pleasure. I intend to give it to the public when I have no other entertainment for them; and shall begin with the first Vision, which I have translated word for word as follows:

On the fifth day of the moon,² which according to the custom of my forefathers I always keep holy, after having washed myself and offered up my morning devotions, I ascended the high hills of Bagdat,³ in order to pass the rest of the day in meditation and prayer. As I was here airing myself on the tops of the mountains, I fell into a profound contemplation on the vanity of human life;

and passing from one thought to another, surely, said I, man is but a shadow and life a dream. While I was thus musing, I cast my eyes towards the summit of a rock that was not far from me, where I discovered one in the habit of a shepherd, with a little musical instrument in his hand. As I looked upon him he applied it to his lips, and began to play upon it. The sound of it was exceeding sweet, and wrought into a variety of tunes that were inexpressibly melodious, and altogether different from anything I had ever heard. They put me in mind of those heavenly airs ⁴ that are played to the departed souls of good men upon their first arrival in Paradise, to wear out the impressions of the last agonies and qualify them for the pleasures of that happy place. My heart melted away in secret raptures.

I had been often told that the rock before me was the haunt of a Genius; ⁵ and that several had been entertained with music who had passed by it, but never heard that the musician had before made himself visible. When he had raised my thoughts, by those transporting airs which he played, to taste the pleasures of his conversation, as I looked upon him as one astonished, he beckoned to me, and by the waving of his hand directed me to approach the place where he sat. I drew near with that reverence which is due to a superior nature; and as my heart was entirely subdued by the captivating strains I had heard, I fell down at his feet and wept. The Genius smiled upon me with a look of compassion and affability that familiarized him to my imagination, and at once dispelled all the fears and apprehensions with which I approached him. He lifted me from the ground, and taking me by

the hand, "Mirzah," said he, "I have heard thee in thy soliloquies, follow me."

He then led me to the highest pinnacle of the rock, and placing me on the top of it, "Cast thy eyes eastward," said he, "and tell me what thou seest." "I see," said I, "a huge valley and a prodigious tide of water rolling through it." "The valley that thou seest," said he, "is the Vale of Misery, and the tide of water that thou seest is part of the great tide of eternity." "What is the reason," said I, "that the tide I see rises out of a thick mist at one end, and again loses itself in a thick mist at the other?" "What thou seest," said he, "is that portion of eternity which is called Time, measured out by the sun, and reaching from the beginning of the world to its consummation. Examine now," said he, "this sea that is bounded with darkness at both ends, and tell me what thou discoverest in it." "I see a bridge," said I, "standing in the midst of the tide." "The bridge thou seest," said he, "is human life; consider it attentively." Upon a more leisurely survey of it, I found that it consisted of three-score and ten⁶ entire arches, with several broken arches, which added to those that were entire, made up the number about a hundred. As I was counting the arches, the Genius told me that this bridge consisted at first of a thousand arches;⁷ but that a great flood swept away the rest, and left the bridge in the ruinous condition I now beheld it. "But tell me further," said he, "what thou discoverest on it." "I see multitudes of people passing over it," said I, "and a black cloud hanging on each end of it." As I looked more attentively, I saw several of the passengers dropping through the bridge,

into the great tide that flowed underneath it; and upon further examination, perceived there were innumerable trap-doors that lay concealed in the bridge, which the passengers no sooner trod upon, but they fell through them into the tide and immediately disappeared. These hidden pitfalls were set very thick at the entrance of the bridge, so that throngs of people no sooner broke through the cloud, but many of them fell into them. They grew thinner towards the middle, but multiplied and lay closer together towards the end of the arches that were entire.

There were, indeed, some persons, but their number was very small, that continued a kind of hobbling march on the broken arches, but fell through one after another, being quite tired and spent with so long a walk.

I passed some time in the contemplation of this wonderful structure, and the great variety of objects which it presented. My heart was filled with a deep melancholy to see several dropping unexpectedly in the midst of mirth and jollity, and catching at everything that stood by them to save themselves. Some were looking up towards the heavens in a thoughtful posture, and in the midst of a speculation stumbled and fell out of sight. Multitudes were very busy in the pursuit of bubbles⁸ that glittered in their eyes and danced before them, but often when they thought themselves within the reach of them their footing failed and down they sank. In this confusion of objects, I observed some with scimitars⁹ in their hands, and others with urinals,¹⁰ who ran to and fro upon the bridge, thrusting several persons on trap-doors which did not seem to lie in their way, and which they might have escaped had they not been thus forced upon them.

The Genius seeing me indulge myself¹¹ in this melancholy prospect, told me I had dwelt long enough upon it: "Take thine eyes off the bridge," said he "and tell me if thou seest anything thou dost not comprehend." Upon looking up, "What mean," said I, "those great flights of birds that are perpetually hovering about the bridge, and settling upon it from time to time? I see vultures, harpies,¹² ravens, cormorants; and among many other feathered creatures several little winged boys,¹³ that perch in great numbers upon the middle arches." "These," said the Genius, "are envy, avarice, superstition, despair, love, with the like cares and passions that infest human life."

I here fetched a deep sigh. "Alas," said I, "Man was made in vain! How is he given away to misery and mortality! tortured in life, and swallowed up in death!" The Genius being moved with compassion towards me, bid me quit so uncomfortable a project: "Look no more," said he, "on man in the first stage of his existence, in his setting out for Eternity; but cast thine eye on that thick mist into which the tide bears the several generations of mortals that fall into it." I directed my sight as I was ordered, and (whether or no the good Genius strengthened it with any supernatural force, or dissipated part of the mist that was before too thick for the eye to penetrate) I saw the valley opening at the farther end, and spreading forth into an immense ocean, that had a huge rock of adamant¹⁴ running through the midst of it, and dividing it into two equal parts. The clouds still rested on one half of it, insomuch that I could discover nothing in it; but the other appeared to me a vast ocean planted with

innumerable islands, that were covered with fruits and flowers, and interwoven with a thousand little shining seas that ran among them. I could see persons dressed in glorious habits,¹⁶ with garlands upon their heads, passing among the trees, lying down by the sides of fountains, or resting on beds of flowers; and could hear a confused harmony of singing birds, falling waters, human voices, and musical instruments. Gladness grew in me upon the discovery of so delightful a scene. I wished for the wings of an eagle, that I might fly away to those happy seats;¹⁶ but the Genius told me there was no passage to them, except through the Gates of Death that I saw opening every moment upon the bridge. "The islands," said he, "that lie so fresh and green before thee, and with which the whole face of the ocean appears spotted as far as thou canst see, are more in numbers than the sands on the seashore; there are myriads of islands behind those which thou here discoverest, reaching farther than thine eye or even imagination can extend itself. These are the mansions of good men after death,¹⁷ who according to the degree and kinds of virtue in which they excelled, are distributed among these several islands, which abound with pleasures of different kinds and degrees, suitable to the relishes and perfections of those who are settled in them; every island is a paradise accommodated to its respective inhabitants. Are not these, O Mirzah, habitations worth contending for? Does life appear miserable, that gives thee opportunities of earning such a reward? Is death to be feared, that will convey thee to so happy an existence? Think not man was made in vain, who has such an Eternity reserved for him." I gazed with

inexpressible pleasure on these happy islands. At length, said I, "Show me now, I beseech thee, the secrets that lie hid under those dark clouds which cover the ocean on the other side of the rock¹⁸ of adamant." The Genius making me no answer, I turned about to address myself to him a second time, but I found that he had left me; I then turned again to the vision which I had been so long contemplating, but instead of the rolling tide, the arched bridge, and the happy islands, I saw nothing but the long hollow Valley of Bagdat, with oxen, sheep, and camels grazing upon the sides of it.

NOTES

1. *Grand Cairo*, the city of Cairo in Egypt. The finding of the manuscript of the Vision is of course fictitious: it is an allegory on life.

2. *fifth day of the moon*, maintaining the Oriental style of the imaginary original.

3. *Bagdat*, the capital of Iraq, and an ancient city of romance, associated with the marvels of the *Arabian Nights* and the adventures of Haroun al Raschid. Therefore, suitable for the Vision.

4. *heavenly airs*; cf. D. G. Rossetti's *The Blessed Damosel*:

"Herself shall bring us, hand in hand,
To Him round whom all souls
Kneel—the unnumber'd solemn heads
Bowed with their aureoles:
And angels, meeting us, shall sing
To their citherns and citoles."

5. *a Genius*, i.e. the spirit of the spot; called by the Romans the "genius loci".

6. *three-score and ten*, the ordinary span of life. Cf. *Psalm xc*: "The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away."

7. *a thousand arches*. Cf. *Genesis*, chap. v: "And all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred sixty and nine years; and he died."

8. *pursuit of bubbles*, worldly fame and ambition; the glittering prizes of life.

9. *scimitars*, indicating soldiers as a cause of untimely death.
10. *urinals*, indicating doctors.
11. *indulge myself*, observe keenly and ponder over.
12. *harpies*, rapacious monsters of mythology, with woman's face and bird's wings and claws.
13. *little winged boys*, little Cupids, love's messengers.
14. *adamant*, a very hard surface.
15. *habits*, garments.
16. *happy seats*, heavenly places, settlements.
17. *the mansions of good men after death*. Cf. *St. John* xiv, the words of Jesus Christ: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you."
18. *the other side of the rock*, Hell, the place of the wicked.

No. 6.—The Man in Black

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

An Irishman like Steele, son of an Irish clergyman, Goldsmith was born at Pallas, Co. Longford, in 1728. He took his degree from Trinity College, Dublin, in 1749, thereafter studying medicine at Edinburgh and Leyden. His rambling nature, however, soon sent him wandering through Europe with his flute. By 1756 he was in London, and on the edge of destitution. In 1760 appeared the articles known as *The Citizen of the World*, 1764 saw the publication of *The Traveller*, and 1766 of *The Vicar of Wakefield*. These were followed by *The Good Natur'd Man*, a comedy, *The Deserted Village*, a poem, and *She Stoops to Conquer*, also a comedy. He died in 1774.

"The gentlest spirit that ever wrote with pen, he strangely endears himself to his audience, since in the clear mirror of his verse are reflected the sweetness and magnanimity of an angelic nature. Even his irony is tender, and his humour a summer lightning." So writes a modern critic. Dr. Johnson's Latin inscription for his monument in Westminster Abbey bears equal tribute to Goldsmith. Translated it reads: There was scarce a literary form which he did not touch, none which he touched did he fail to adorn.

The Man in Black is one of the essays in *The Citizen of the World*, purporting to be the views of a Chinese visitor on contemporary English society. Here Goldsmith's work invites comparison with that of Steele and Addison, as he, like them, pokes fun at his own generation, with, perhaps, more humour than satire. Naturally, the Chinese visitor is interested in national characteristics, whereas the Spectator concerns himself

chiefly with society. Goldsmith's style is as careful as Addison's; and there is in it a pleasing balance of thoughts, artificial but effective.

Though fond of many acquaintances, I desire an intimacy only with a few. The Man in Black, whom I have often mentioned, is one whose friendship I could wish to acquire, because he possesses my esteem. His manners, it is true, are tinctured with some strange inconsistencies; and he may be justly termed a humorist in a nation of humorists. Though he is generous even to profusion, he affects to be thought a prodigy of parsimony and prudence; though his conversation be replete with the most sordid and selfish maxims, his heart is dilated with the most unbounded love. I have known him profess himself a man-hater while his cheek was glowing with compassion; and, while his looks were softened into pity, I have heard him use the language of the most unbounded ill-nature. Some affect humanity and tenderness, others boast of having such dispositions from nature; but he is the only man I ever knew who seemed ashamed of his natural benevolence. He takes as much pains to hide his feelings as any hypocrite would to conceal his indifference; but on every unguarded moment the mask drops off, and reveals him to the most superficial observer.

In one of our late excursions into the country, happening to discourse upon the provision that was made for the poor in England, he seemed amazed how any of his countrymen could be so foolishly weak as to relieve occasional objects of charity when the laws had made such ample provision for their support. "In every

parish house," says he, "the poor are supplied with food, clothes, fire, and a bed to lie on; they want no more, I desire no more myself; yet still they seem discontented. I am surprised at the inactivity of our magistrates in not taking up such vagrants, who are only a weight upon the industrious; I am surprised that the people are found to relieve them, when they must be at the same time sensible ¹ that it in some measure encourages idleness, extravagance, and imposture. Were I to advise any man for whom I had the least regard, I would caution him by all means not to be imposed upon by their false pretences: let me assure you, sir, they are impostors, every one of them, and rather merit a prison than relief."

He was proceeding in this strain, earnestly to dissuade me from any imprudence of which I am guilty, when an old man, who still had about him the remnants of tattered finery, implored our compassion. He assured us that he was no common beggar, but forced into the shameful profession to support a dying wife and five hungry children. Being prepossessed against such falsehoods, his story had not the least influence upon me; but it was quite otherwise with the Man in Black: I could see it visibly operate upon his countenance and effectually interrupt his harangue. I could easily perceive that his heart burned to relieve the five starving children, but he seemed ashamed to discover ² his weakness to me. While he thus hesitated between compassion and pride, I pretended to look another way; and he seized this opportunity of giving the poor petitioner a piece of silver, bidding him at the same time, in order that I should hear, go work for his bread, and not tease pas-

sengers with such impertinent falsehoods for the future.

As he had fancied himself quite unperceived, he continued as we proceeded to rail against ³ beggars with as much animosity as before; he threw in some episodes of his own amazing prudence and economy, with his profound skill in discovering impostors; he explained the manner in which he would deal with beggars were he a magistrate, hinted at enlarging some of the prisons for their reception, and told two stories of ladies who were robbed by beggar-men. He was beginning a third to the same purpose, when a sailor with a wooden leg once more crossed our walks, desiring our pity and blessing our limbs. I was for going ⁴ on without taking any notice, but my friend, looking wistfully upon the poor petitioner, bid me stop, and he would show me with how much ease he could at any time detect an impostor.

He now, therefore, assumed a look of importance, and in an angry tone began to examine the sailor, demanding in what engagement ⁵ he was thus disabled and rendered unfit for service. The sailor replied, in a tone as angrily as he, that he had been an officer on board a private ship of war, and that he had lost his leg abroad in defence of those who did nothing at home. At this reply, all my friend's importance vanished in a moment; he had not a single question more to ask; he now only studied what method he should take to relieve him unobserved. He had, however, no easy part to act, as he was obliged to preserve the appearance of ill-nature before me, and yet relieve himself by relieving the sailor. Casting, therefore, a furious look upon some bundles of chips which the fellow carried in a string at his back, my friend

demanding how he sold his matches; but, not waiting for a reply, desired, in a surly tone, to have a shilling's worth. The sailor seemed at first surprised at his demand, but soon recollecting himself, and presenting his whole bundle, "Here, master," says he, "take all my cargo,⁶ and a blessing into the bargain."

It is impossible to describe with what an air of triumph my friend marched off with his new purchase: he assured me that he was firmly of opinion that those fellows must have stolen their goods, who could thus afford to sell them for half value. He informed me of several different uses to which those chips might be applied; he expatiated largely upon the savings which would result from lighting candles with a match, instead of thrusting them into the fire. He averred, that he would as soon have parted with a tooth as his money to those vagabonds, unless for some valuable consideration. I cannot tell how long this panegyric upon frugality and matches might have continued, had not his attention been called off by another object more distressful than either of the former. A woman in rags, with one child in her arms, and another on her back, was attempting to sing ballads, but with such a mournful voice that it was difficult to determine whether she was singing or crying. A wretch, who in the deepest distress, still aimed at good humour, was an object my friend was by no means capable of withstanding: his vivacity and his discourse were instantly interrupted; upon this occasion, his very dissimulation had forsaken him. Even in my presence he immediately applied his hands to his pockets in order to relieve her; but guess his confusion when he found he had already

given away all the money he carried about him to former objects. The misery painted in the woman's visage was not half so strongly expressed as the agony in his. He continued to search for some time, but to no purpose, till, at length recollecting himself, with a face of ineffable good-nature, as he had no money, he put into her hands his shilling's worth of matches!

NOTES

1. *must be sensible*, must realize perfectly.
2. *discover*, reveal, disclose.
3. *rail against*, speak bitterly against.
4. *was for going*, intended to go on.
5. *engagement*, naval battle.
6. *cargo*; using a sea-term naturally enough.

No. 7.—Independence

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

In respect of brilliance of style and expression this essay comes nearest, perhaps, to those of Lord Bacon, while it displays also Goldsmith's command over a varied and choice vocabulary. It is, in addition, Johnsonian without the ponderousness which too often characterizes the Doctor's style.

Few virtues have been more praised by moralists than generosity; every practical treatise of ethics tends to increase our sensibility¹ of the distresses of others, and to relax the grasp of frugality.² Philosophers that are poor, praise it because they are gainers by its effects; and the opulent Seneca³ himself has written a treatise on benefits, though he was known to give nothing away.

But among many who have enforced the duty of giving, I am surprised there is none to inculcate the ignominy of receiving; to show that by every favour we accept, we in some measure forfeit our native freedom;⁴ and that a state of continual dependence on the generosity of others, is a life of gradual debasement.

Were men taught to despise the receiving obligations with the same force of reasoning and declamation as they are instructed to confer them, we might then see every person in society filling up the requisite duties of

his station with cheerful industry, neither relaxed ⁵ from hope, nor sullen from disappointment.

Every favour a man receives in some measure sinks him below his dignity; and in proportion to the value of the benefit, or the frequency of its acceptance, he gives up so much of his natural independence. He, therefore, who thrives upon the unmerited bounty of another, if he has any sensibility, suffers the worst of servitude; the shackled slave may murmur ⁶ without reproach, but the humble dependent is taxed with ingratitude upon every symptom of discontent; the one may rave round the walls of his cell, but the other lingers in all the silence of mental confinement. To increase his distress, every new obligation but adds to the former load which kept the vigorous mind from rising: till at last, elastic no longer, it shapes itself to constraint, and puts on habitual servility.

It is thus with a feeling mind; but there are some who, born without any share of sensibility, receive favour after favour, and still cringe for more; who accept the offer of generosity with as little reluctance as the wages of merit, and even make thanks for past benefits an indirect petition for new: such, I grant, can suffer no debasement from dependence, since they were originally as vile as was possible to be; dependence degrades only the ingenuous, but leaves the sordid mind in pristine meanness. In this manner, therefore, long continued generosity is misplaced, or it is injurious; it either finds a man worthless, or it makes him so; and true it is, that the person who is contented to be often obliged ⁷ ought not to have been obliged at all.

Yet while I describe the meanness of a life of continued dependence, I would not be thought to include those natural or political subordinations which subsist in every society; for in such, though dependence is exacted from the inferior, yet the obligation on either side is mutual. The son must rely on his parent for support, but the parent lies under the same obligation to give, as the other has to expect; the subordinate officer must receive the commands of his superior, but for this obedience the former has a right to demand an intercourse of favour. Such is not the dependence I would deprecate, but that where every expected favour must be the result of mere benevolence in the giver; where the benefit can be kept without remorse or transferred without injustice. The character of a legacy-hunter, for instance, is detestable in some countries and despicable in all; this universal contempt of a man who infringes upon none of the laws of society, some moralists have arraigned as a popular and unjust prejudice, never considering the necessary degradations a wretch must undergo, who previously expects to grow rich by benefits, without having either natural or social claims to enforce his petitions.

But this intercourse of benefaction and acknowledgment is often injurious, even to the giver as well as to the receiver. A man can gain but little knowledge of himself, or of the world, amidst a circle of those whom hope or gratitude has gathered round him; their unceasing humiliations must necessarily increase his comparative magnitude, for all men measure their own abilities by those of their company: thus being taught

to overrate his merit, he in reality lessens it; increasing in confidence, but not in power, his professions end in empty boast, his undertakings in shameful disappointment.

It is, perhaps, one of the severest misfortunes of the great that they are, in general, obliged to live among men whose real value is lessened by dependence, and whose minds are enslaved by obligation. The humble companion may have at first accepted patronage with generous views; but soon he feels the mortifying influence of conscious inferiority, by degrees sinks into a flatterer, and from flattery at last degenerates into stupid veneration. To remedy this, the great often dismiss their old dependents and take new. Such changes are falsely imputed to levity, falsehood, or caprice in the patron, since they may be more justly ascribed to the client's deterioration.⁸

No, my son, a life of independence is generally a life of virtue. It is that which fits the soul for every generous flight of humanity, freedom, and friendship. To give should be our pleasure, but to receive, our shame; serenity, health and affluence attend the desire of rising by labour: misery, repentance and disrespect, that of succeeding by extorted benevolence; the man who can thank himself alone for the happiness he enjoys is truly blest; and lovely, far more lovely, the sturdy gloom of laborious indigence, than the fawning simper of thriving adulation.

NOTES

1. *sensibility*, sympathetic feeling for.
2. *to relax the grasp of frugality*, to keep us free from avarice and miserliness.
3. *the opulent Seneca*, Roman statesman and philosopher of the

time of the Emperor Nero. He was born in 3 B.C. and died by his own hand in A.D. 65. A writer of tragedies and moral essays, he was said to be a Stoic only in his moral writings, which are certainly remarkable for their high ethical conceptions.

4. *native freedom*, personal independence of character.
5. *relaxed*, ceasing to make an effort.
6. *murmur*, complain aloud and openly.
7. *obliged*, been in receipt of the generosity of another.
8. *client's deterioration*, the dependant's falling off.

No. 8.—Revenge

SAMUEL JOHNSON

Samuel Johnson, born 1709, died 1784, was educated at Pembroke College, Oxford. His works include: *London*, *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, *Rasselas* and the *Lives of the Poets*. The *Rambler* and the *Idler* are periodical essays after the manner of the *Spectator*. Johnson's *Dictionary* is universally known; and his edition of Shakespeare is remarkable for his ingenious and perspicuous readings of the text. He was the literary dictator of his time; and we are fortunate in having Boswell as his biographer to record his literary criticisms and political maxims, his witty sayings and bludgeon-like replies to his opponents in argument.

It is impossible to make a collection of representative essays without finding a place for one of Doctor Johnson's, whose Latinized style with its ponderous harmonies does not yet repel us, not only by virtue of its frequent cadences but because of its more frequent elegance and correctness. The learned Doctor may be long-winded, but he always seeks to achieve clearness and definiteness, while nothing slipshod is permitted to disfigure his sentences. Properly directed, the study of Johnson's thoughtful style will afford a most valuable training to youthful writers of English; and this characteristic essay from the *Rambler* has been selected as a model. Care must, however, be taken always to distinguish the eighteenth century usage and meaning of words from our modern habit.

No vicious dispositions ¹ of the mind more obstinately resist both the counsels of philosophy and the injunctions

of religion, than those which are complicated with an opinion of dignity; and which we cannot dismiss without leaving in the hands of opposition some advantage iniquitously obtained, or suffering from our own prejudices some imputation of pusillanimity.

For this reason, scarcely any law of our Redeemer ² is more openly transgressed, or more industriously evaded, than that by which He commands His followers to forgive injuries, and prohibits, under the sanction of eternal misery, the gratification of the desire which every man feels to return pain upon him who inflicts it. Many who could have conquered their anger are unable to combat pride, and pursue offences to extremity of vengeance, lest they should be insulted by the triumph of an enemy.

But, certainly, no precept could better become Him, at whose birth ³ peace was proclaimed to the earth. For, what would so soon destroy all the order of society, and deform ⁴ life with violence and ravage, as a permission to everyone to judge his own cause, and to apportion his own recompense for imagined injuries?

It is difficult for a man of the strictest justice not to favour himself too much, in the calmest moments of solitary meditation. Everyone wishes for the distinctions for which thousands are wishing at the same time, in their own opinion, with better claims. He who, when his reason operates in its full force, can thus, by the mere prevalence of self-love, prefer himself to his fellow-beings, is very unlikely to judge equitably when his passions are agitated by a sense of wrong, and his attention wholly engrossed by pain, interest or danger. Whoever arrogates to himself the right of vengeance, shows

how little he is qualified to decide his own claims, since he certainly demands what he would think unfit to be granted to another.

Nothing is more apparent than that, however injured, or however provoked, some must at last be contented to forgive. For it can never be hoped that he who first commits an injury, will contentedly acquiesce in the penalty required: the same haughtiness of contempt, or vehemence of desire, which prompts the act of injustice, will more strongly incite its justification; and resentment can never so exactly balance the punishment with the fault, but there will remain an overplus of vengeance which even he who condemns his first action will think himself entitled to retaliate. What then can ensue but a continual exacerbation of hatred, and unextinguishable feud, an incessant reciprocation of mischief, a mutual vigilance to entrap, and eagerness to destroy?

Since then the imaginary right of vengeance must be at last remitted, because it is impossible to live in perpetual hostility, and equally impossible, that of two enemies, either should first think himself obliged by justice to submission, it is surely eligible⁵ to forgive early. Every passion is more easily subdued before it has been long accustomed to possession of the heart; every idea is obliterated with less difficulty, as it has been more slightly impressed, and less frequently renewed. He who has often⁶ brooded over his wrongs, pleased himself with schemes of malignity, and glutted his pride with the fancied supplications of humbled enmity, will not easily open his bosom to amity and reconciliation, or indulge the gentlest sentiments of benevolence and peace.

It is easiest to forgive, while there is yet little to be forgiven. A simple injury may be soon dismissed from the memory; but a long succession of ill offices⁷ by degrees associates itself with every idea, a long contest involves so many circumstances, that every place and action will recall it to the mind, and fresh remembrance of vexation must still enkindle rage and irritate revenge.

A wise man will make haste to forgive, because he knows the true value of time, and will not suffer it to pass away in unnecessary pain. He who willingly suffers the corrosions of inveterate hatred, and gives up his days and nights to the gloom of malice and perturbations of stratagem, cannot surely be said to consult his ease.⁸ Resentment is a union of sorrow with malignity, a combination of a passion which all endeavour to avoid, with a passion which all concur to detest. The man who retires to meditate mischief, and to exasperate his own rage; whose thoughts are employed only on means of distress, and contrivances of ruin; whose mind never pauses from the remembrance of his own sufferings, but to indulge some hope of enjoying the calamities of another, may justly be numbered among the most miserable of human beings, among those who are guilty without reward, who have neither the gladness of prosperity nor the calm of innocence.

Whoever considers the weakness both of himself and others, will not long want persuasives⁹ to forgiveness. We know not to what degree of malignity any injury is to be imputed, or how much its guilt, if we were to inspect the mind of him that committed it, would be extenuated by mistake, precipitance¹⁰ or negligence; we cannot be

certain how much more we feel than was intended to be inflicted, or how much we increase the mischief to ourselves by voluntary aggravations. We may charge to design the effects of accident; we may think the blow violent only because we have made ourselves delicate and tender; we are on every side in danger of error and of guilt, which we are certain to avoid only by speedy forgiveness.

From this pacific and harmless temper, thus propitious to others and ourselves, to domestic tranquillity and to social happiness, no man is withheld but by pride, by the fear of being insulted by his adversary, or despised by the world.

It may be laid down as an unfailing and universal axiom, that "all pride is abject and mean". It is always an ignorant, lazy, or cowardly acquiescence in a false appearance of excellence, and proceeds not from consciousness of our attainments, but insensibility of our wants.

Nothing can be great which is not right. Nothing which reason condemns can be suitable to the dignity of the human mind. To be driven ¹¹ by external motives from the path which our own heart approves, to give way to anything but conviction, to suffer the opinion of others to rule our choice or overpower our resolves, is to submit tamely to the lowest and most ignominious slavery, and to resign the right of directing our own lives.

The utmost excellence at which humanity can arrive is a constant and determinate ¹² pursuit of virtue, without regard to present dangers or advantage; a continual

reference of every action to the Divine will, an habitual appeal to everlasting justice; and an unvaried elevation of the intellectual eye to the reward which perseverance only can obtain. But that pride which many who presume to boast of generous sentiments, allow to regulate their measures, has nothing nobler in view than the approbation of men, of beings whose superiority we are under no obligation to acknowledge, and who, when we have courted them with the utmost assiduity, can confer no valuable or permanent reward; of beings who ignorantly judge of what they do not understand, or partially¹³ determine what they never have examined; and whose sentence is therefore of no weight till it has received the ratification of our own conscience.

He who can descend to bribe suffrages like these, at the price of his innocence; he who can suffer the delight of such acclamations to withhold his attention from the commands of the universal Sovereign,¹⁴ has little reason to congratulate himself upon the greatness of his mind; whenever he awakes to seriousness and reflection, he must become despicable in his own eyes, and shrink with shame from the remembrance of his cowardice and folly.

Of him that hopes to be forgiven, it is indispensably required that he forgive. It is therefore superfluous to urge any other motive. On this great duty eternity is suspended,¹⁵ and to him that refuses to practise it, the throne of mercy is inaccessible, and the Saviour of the world has been born in vain.

NOTES

1. *No vicious dispositions, &c.*, "no faults are more difficult to correct than those which affect our sense of personal dignity, which we cannot get rid of without feeling that our enemies have triumphed over us, and that we have acted in a cowardly fashion."

2. *Redeemer*, Jesus Christ, who invariably preached forgiveness, e.g. *St. Luke*, chap. vi: "Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you. Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you." "But love ye your enemies, and do good." "Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven."

3. *Him, at whose birth*, Jesus Christ.

4. *deform*, make ugly.

5. *eligible*, desirable, fitting.

6. *He who has often, &c.*, students should study the form and choice expression of this sentence.

7. *ill offices*, injurious actions.

8. *consult his ease*, consider his own pleasure.

9. *want persuasives*, lack reasons for.

10. *precipitance*, which is *precipitation* in modern English.

11. *To be driven, &c.*, another example of the strength and force of Johnson's style and expression, when he frees himself from heaviness.

12. *determinate*, used in a Johnsonian sense: persistent, resolute.

13. *partially*, one-sidedly, biassed, without impartiality.

14. *universal Sovereign*, Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

15. *eternity is suspended*, because our hope of eternal happiness depends upon our forgiving our enemies.

No. 9.—Dream Children

CHARLES LAMB

Lamb was born in London in 1775 and was educated at Christ's Hospital, where he met Coleridge. Soon after leaving school he received a post in the South Sea House, and later was appointed to a clerkship in the East India Company's office. Throughout his life he had to care for his sister Mary, who was subject to recurring fits of insanity. In 1807 the famous *Tales from Shakespeare*, their joint work, appeared. In 1808 Charles produced his *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets*, and the *Essays of Elia* began to appear in 1820. He died in 1834, the same year as his life-long friend Coleridge. Lamb is more whimsical, and perhaps more tender, than either Steele or Goldsmith. His character sketches are equally delightful; he has a fund of human sympathy and a rich vein of rather Puckish humour; while the self-revelation in his many personal touches is wholly his own, and constitutes one of his chief charms. Lamb's style is neither so clear nor so simple as his predecessors'; in this essay in particular the narrative is conceived in the manner of a bed-time story for children, and the expression is occasionally and deliberately childish.

Children love to listen to stories about their elders, when *they* were children; to stretch their imagination to the conception of a traditionary great-uncle or granddame, whom they never saw. It was in this spirit that my little ones¹ crept about me the other evening to hear about their great-grandmother Field,² who lived in a great

house in Norfolk (a hundred times bigger than that in which they and Papa lived) which had been the scene—so at least it was generally believed in that part of the country—of the tragic incidents which they had lately become familiar with from the ballad³ of the Children in the Wood. Certain it is that the whole story of the children and their cruel uncle was to be seen fairly carved out in wood upon the chimney-piece of the great hall, the whole story down to the Robin Redbreasts,⁴ till a foolish rich person pulled it down to set up a marble one of modern invention in its stead, with no story upon it. Here Alice put out one of her dear mother's looks, too tender to be called upbraiding. Then I went on to say,⁵ how religious and how good their great-grandmother Field was, how beloved and respected by everybody, though she was not indeed the mistress of this great house, but had only the charge of it (and yet in some respects she might be said to be the mistress of it too) committed to her by the owner, who preferred living in a newer and more fashionable mansion which he had purchased somewhere in the adjoining county; but still she lived in it in a manner as if it had been her own, and kept up the dignity of the great house in a sort while she lived, which afterwards came to decay, and was nearly pulled down, and all its old ornaments stripped and carried away to the owner's other house, where they were set up, and looked as awkward as if some one were to carry away the old tombs they had seen lately at the Abbey,⁶ and stick them up in Lady C.'s tawdry gilt drawing-room. Here John smiled, as much as to say, "That would be foolish indeed." And then I told⁷ how, when she came to die, her funeral

was attended by a concourse of all the poor, and some of the gentry too, of the neighbourhood for many miles round, to show their respect for her memory, because she had been such a good and religious woman; so good indeed that she knew all the Psaltery ⁸ by heart, ay and a great part of the Testament ⁹ besides. Here little Alice spread her hands. 'Then I told what a tall, upright, graceful person their great-grandmother Field once was; and how in her youth she was esteemed the best dancer—here Alice's little right foot played an involuntary movement, till upon my looking grave, it desisted—the best dancer, I was saying, in the county, till a cruel disease, called a cancer, came, and bowed her down with pain; but it could never bend her good spirits, or make them stoop, but they were still upright, because she was so good and religious. Then I told how she was used to sleep by herself in a lone chamber of the great lone house; and how she believed that an apparition of two infants was to be seen at midnight gliding up and down the great staircase near where she slept, but she said "those innocents would do her no harm"; and how frightened I used to be, though in those days ¹⁰ I had my maid to sleep with me, because I was never half so good or religious as she—and yet I never saw the infants. Here John expanded all his eyebrows and tried to look courageous. Then I told how good she was to all her grandchildren, having us to the great house in the holidays, where I in particular used to spend many hours by myself, in gazing upon the old busts of the Twelve Cæsars, that had been Emperors of Rome, till the old marble heads would seem to live again, or I to be turned into marble

with them; how I never could be tired with roaming about that huge mansion, with its vast empty rooms, with their worn-out hangings, fluttering tapestry,¹¹ and carved oaken panels, with the gilding almost rubbed out—sometimes in the spacious old-fashioned gardens, which I had almost to myself, unless when now and then a solitary gardening man would cross me—and how the nectarines¹² and peaches hung upon the walls, without my ever offering to pluck them, because they were forbidden fruit, unless now and then—and because I had more pleasure in strolling about among the old melancholy-looking yew trees, or the firs, and picking up the red berries, and the fir apples, which were good for nothing but to look at—or in lying about the fresh grass, with all the fine garden smells around me—or basking¹³ in the orangery, till I could almost fancy myself ripening too along with the oranges and the limes in that grateful warmth—or in watching the dace that darted to and fro in the fish-pond, at the bottom of the garden, with here and there a great sulky pike hanging midway down the water in silent state, as if it mocked at their impertinent friskings—I had more pleasure in these busy-idle diversions than in all the sweet flavours of peaches, nectarines, oranges, and such like common baits of children. Here John slyly deposited back upon the plate a bunch of grapes, which, not unobserved by Alice, he had meditated dividing with her, and both seemed willing to relinquish them for the present as irrelevant. Then in somewhat a more heightened¹⁴ tone, I told how, though their great-grand-mother Field loved all her grand-children, yet in an especial manner she might be said to love their uncle,

John L——,¹⁵ because he was so handsome and spirited a youth, and a king to the rest of us; and, instead of moping about in solitary corners, like some of us, he would mount the most mettlesome horse he could get, when but an imp no bigger than themselves, and make it carry him half over the county in a morning, and join the hunters¹⁶ when there were any out—and yet he loved the old great house and gardens too, but had too much spirit to be always pent up within their boundaries—and how their uncle grew to man's estate as brave as he was handsome, to the admiration of everybody, but of their great-grandmother Field most especially; and how he used to carry me upon his back when I was a lame-footed¹⁷ boy—for he was a good bit older than me—many a mile when I could not walk for pain;—and how in after life he became lame-footed too, and I did not always (I fear) make allowances enough for him when he was impatient, and in pain, nor remember sufficiently how considerate he had been to me when I was lame-footed; and how when he died, though he had not been dead an hour, it seemed as if he had died a great while ago, such a distance there is betwixt life and death; and how I bore his death, as I thought, pretty well at first, but after it haunted and haunted me; and though I did not cry or take it to heart as some do, and as I think he would have done if I had died, yet I missed him all day long, and knew not till then how much I had loved him. I missed his kindness, and I missed his crossness, and wished him to be alive again to be quarrelling with him (for we quarrelled sometimes), rather than not have him again, and was as uneasy without him as he, their poor uncle,¹⁸ must have been when

the doctor took off his limb. Here the children fell a crying, and asked if their little mourning which they had on was not for Uncle John, and they looked up and prayed me not to go on about their uncle, but to tell them some stories about their pretty dead mother. Then I told how for seven long years, in hope sometimes, sometimes in despair, yet persisting ever, I courted the fair Alice W——n,¹⁹ and, as much as children could understand, I explained to them what coyness, and difficulty, and denial meant in maidens—when suddenly, turning to Alice, the soul of the first Alice looked out at her eyes with such a reality of re-presentment,²⁰ that I became in doubt which of them stood there before me, or whose that bright hair was; and while I stood gazing both the children gradually grew fainter to my view, receding, and still receding, till nothing at last but two mournful features were seen in the uttermost distance, which, without speech, strangely impressed upon me the effects of speech: “We are not of Alice, nor of thee, nor are we children at all. The children of Alice call Bartrum father. We are nothing; less than nothing, and dreams. We are only what might have been, and must wait upon the tedious shores of Lethe ²¹ millions of ages before we have existence and a name”—and immediately awaking, I found myself quietly seated in my bachelor armchair, where I had fallen asleep, with the faithful Bridget ²² unchanged by my side—but John L. (or James Elia) was gone for ever.

NOTES

1. *my little ones*, part of his dream. Lamb was never married, but devoted his life to the care of his sister.

2. *great-grandmother Field*. Lamb refers to his maternal grandmother, who was housekeeper at Blakesware in Hertfordshire, where he spent his youthful holidays.

3. *the ballad*, popularly known as *The Babes in the Wood*; the harrowing tale of two little orphans whose uncle had them murdered by two ruffians.

4. *Robin Redbreasts*. Cf. the above Ballad:

“ Thus wandered these poor innocents,
Till death did end their grief,
In one another's arms they died,
As wanting true relief.
No burial this pretty pair
Of any man receives,
Till Robin-redbreast piously
Did cover them with leaves.”

5. *Then I went on to say*, in the style of a bed-time story. Note also in this long sentence the repetition of detail after detail, each linked by the “ and ” of this type of tale.

6. *the Abbey*, Westminster Abbey.

7. *then I told*, again the manner of the child story.

8. *Psaltery*, the book of Psalms in the Bible.

9. *the Testament*, the New Testament of the Bible.

10. *in those days*, when spending his holidays at Blakesware.

11. *tapestry*, ornamented cloth curtains which in old days took the place of wall-paper or wainscot.

12. *nectarines*, a variety of the common peach.

13. *or basking*; note the string of “ ors ” occurring here.

14. *more heightened*, with greater emotion.

15. *John L—*, John Lamb, brother of Charles.

16. *hunters*, the gentlemen of the county going hunting the fox.

17. *lame-footed*, an imaginary detail. Lamb's infirmity was stammering.

18. *poor uncle*. John Lamb was not in fact particularly affectionate towards his brother and sister, and went, as a rule, his own way.

19. *Alice W—n*, a sweetheart of his youth, said to be Alice Winn, who married a man named Bartrum.

20. *re-presentment*, re-creation.

21. *Lethe*, the river of forgetfulness of the ancients.

22. *Bridget*, his sister Mary.

No. 10.—The Stage Coach¹

WASHINGTON IRVING

Irving was born in New York in 1783. Educated in America, he paid his first visit to Europe in 1803. He revisited it in 1815, staying with Scott at Abbotsford. In 1819 appeared *The Sketch Book*, with the immortal story of *Rip Van Winkle* and the *Legend of Sleepy Hollow*. A visit to Spain inspired the *Life of Columbus*, the *Conquest of Granada* and *The Alhambra*. He became successively secretary to the American Legation in London and Minister to Spain. Other works include a life of Mahomet and a biography of Goldsmith. He died in 1859.

Irving was the pioneer of those American writers of the early nineteenth century who delighted in the purity of their English style. His pages have the correctness of Addison and the charm of Goldsmith; and his descriptions of English life are warmed by a sympathy for her historical institutions lacking in the Chinese visitor. "When he began his work," writes Andrew Lang, "America had no literature; when he died her chief poets and historians had given full assurance of their powers."

In the course of a December tour in Yorkshire, I rode for a long distance in one of the public coaches, on the day preceding Christmas.² The coach was crowded, both inside and out, with passengers, who, by their talk, seemed principally bound to the mansions of relations and friends, to eat the Christmas dinner. It was loaded also with hampers of game, and baskets and boxes of

delicacies; and hares hung dangling their long ears about the coachman's box, presents from distant friends for the impending feast.³ I had three fine rosy-cheeked school-boys for my fellow-passengers inside, full of the buoyant health and manly spirit which I have observed in the children of this country. They were returning home for the holidays in high glee, and promising themselves a world of enjoyment. It was delightful to hear the gigantic plans of the little rogues, and the impracticable feats they were to perform during their six weeks' emancipation from the abhorred thralldom of book, birch,⁴ and pedagogue. They were full of anticipations of the meeting with the family and household, down to the very cat and dog; and of the joy they were to give their little sisters⁵ by the presents with which their pockets were crammed; but the meeting to which they seemed to look forward with the greatest impatience was with Bantam, which I found to be a pony, and according to their talk, possessed of more virtues than any steed since the days of Bucephalus.⁶ How he could trot! how he could run! and then such leaps as he would take—there was not a hedge in the whole country that he could not clear.

They were under the particular guardianship of the coachman, to whom, whenever an opportunity presented, they addressed a host of questions, and pronounced him one of the best fellows in the world. Indeed, I could not but notice the more than ordinary air of bustle and importance of the coachman, who wore his hat a little on one side, and had a large bunch of Christmas greens⁷ stuck in the button-hole of his coat. He is always⁸ a personage full of mighty care and business, but he is

particularly so during this season, having so many commissions to execute in consequence of the great interchange of presents. And here, perhaps, it may not be unacceptable to my untravelled readers to have a sketch that may serve as a general representation of this very numerous and important class of functionaries, who have a dress, a manner, a language, an air, peculiar to themselves, and prevalent throughout the fraternity;⁹ so that, wherever an English stage-coachman may be seen, he cannot be mistaken for one of any other craft or mystery.¹⁰

He has commonly a broad, full face, curiously mottled with red, as if the blood had been forced by hard feeding¹¹ into every vessel of the skin; he is swelled into jolly dimensions by frequent potations of malt liquors,¹² and his bulk is still further increased by a multiplicity of coats, in which he is buried like a cauliflower, the upper one reaching to his heels. He wears a broad-brimmed, low-crowned hat; a huge roll of coloured handkerchief about his neck, knowingly knotted¹³ and tucked in at the bosom; and has in summer time a large bouquet of flowers in his buttonhole; the present, most probably, of some enamoured country lass. His waistcoat is commonly of some bright colour, striped, and his small-clothes extend far below the knees to meet a pair of jockey-boots¹⁴ which reach about half-way up his legs.

All this costume is maintained with much precision; he has a pride in having his clothes of excellent materials; and, notwithstanding the seeming grossness of his appearance, there is still discernible that neatness and propriety of person¹⁵ which is almost inherent in an

Englishman. He enjoys great consequence¹⁶ and consideration along the road; has frequent conferences with the village housewives, who look upon him as a man of great trust and dependence; and he seems to have a good understanding with every bright-eyed country lass.

The moment he arrives where the horses are to be changed, he throws down the reins with something of an air, and abandons the cattle¹⁷ to the care of the ostler; his duty being merely to drive from one stage to another. When off the box, his hands are thrust into the pockets of his great coat, and he rolls¹⁸ about the inn yard with an air of the most absolute lordliness. Here he is generally surrounded by an admiring throng of ostlers, stable-boys, shoe-blacks, and those nameless hangers-on who infest inns and taverns, and run errands, and do all kinds of odd jobs, for the privilege of battenning on¹⁹ the drippings of the kitchen and the leakage of the tap-room. These all look up to him as to an oracle;²⁰ treasure up his cant phrases; ²¹ echo his opinions about horses and other topics of jockey lore; ²² and above all, endeavour to imitate his air and carriage. Every ragamuffin that has a coat to his back thrusts his hands in the pockets, rolls in his gait, talks slang, and is an embryo ²³ Coachey.

Perhaps it might be owing to the pleasing serenity²⁴ that reigned in my own mind, that I fancied I saw cheerfulness in every countenance throughout the journey. A stage coach, however, carries animation always with it, and puts the world in motion as it whirls along. The horn, sounded at the entrance of a village, produces a general bustle. Some hasten forth to meet friends, some

with bundles and band-boxes to secure places, and in the hurry of the moment can hardly take leave of the group that accompanies them. In the meantime the coachman has a world of ²⁵ small commissions to execute. Sometimes he delivers a hare or pheasant; sometimes jerks a small parcel or newspaper to the door of a public-house; and sometimes, with knowing leer and words of sly import, hands to some half-blushing, half-laughing housemaid an odd-shaped billet-doux ²⁶ from some rustic admirer."

As the coach rattles through the village, every one runs to the window, and you have glances on every side of fresh country faces and blooming ²⁷ giggling girls. At the corners are assembled juntos ²⁸ of village idlers and wise men, who take their stations there for the important purpose of seeing company pass; but the sagest knot is generally at the blacksmith's, to whom the passing of the coach is an event fruitful of much speculation. The smith, with the horse's heel in his lap, pauses as the vehicle whirls by; the cyclops ²⁹ round the anvil suspend their ringing hammers, and suffer the iron to grow cool; and the sooty spectre ³⁰ in brown paper cap, labouring at the bellows, leans on the handle for a moment, and permits the asthmatic engine ³¹ to heave a long drawn sigh, while he glares through the murky smoke and sulphureous gleams of the smithy.

Perhaps the impending holiday might have given a more than usual animation to the country, for it seemed to me as if everybody was in good looks and good spirits. Game, poultry, and other luxuries of the table, were in brisk circulation in the villages; the grocers', butchers',

and fruiterers' shops were thronged with customers. The housewives were stirring briskly about, putting their dwellings in order; and the glossy branches of holly, with their bright red berries, began to appear at the windows.

The scene brought to mind an old writer's account of Christmas preparations;—"Now capons and hens, besides turkeys, geese, and ducks, with beef and mutton—must all die—for in twelve days a multitude of people will not be fed with a little. Now plums and spice, sugar and honey, square it among pies and broth. Now or never must music be in tune, for the youth must dance and sing to get them a heat, while the aged sit by the fire. The country maid leaves half her market, and must be sent again, if she forgets a pack of cards on Christmas eve. Great is the contention of holly and ivy, whether master or dame wears the breeches.³² Dice and cards benefit the butler; and if the cook do not lack wit, he will sweetly lick his fingers."

I was roused from this fit of luxurious meditation, by a shout from my little travelling companions. They had been looking out of the coach windows for the last few miles, recognizing every tree and cottage as they approached home, and now there was a general burst of joy—"There's John! and there's old Carlo! and there's Bantam!" cried the happy little rogues, clapping their hands.

At the end of the lane there was an old sober-looking servant in livery, waiting for them; he was accompanied by a superannuated ³³ pointer, and by the redoubtable Bantam, a little old rat of a pony, with a shaggy mane and

long rustic tail, who stood dosing quietly by the roadside, little dreaming of the bustling times that awaited him.

I was pleased to see the fondness with which the little fellows leaped about the steady old footman, and hugged the pointer; who wriggled his whole body for joy. But Bantam was the great object of interest; all wanted to mount at once, and it was with some difficulty that John arranged that they should ride by turns, and the eldest should ride first.

Off they set at last; one on the pony, with the dog bounding and barking before him, and the others holding John's hands; both talking at once, and overpowering him with questions about home, and with school anecdotes. I looked after them with a feeling ³⁴ in which I do not know whether pleasure or melancholy predominated; for I was reminded of those days when, like them, I had neither known care nor sorrow, and a holiday was the summit of earthly felicity. We stopped a few moments afterwards to water the horses, and on resuming our route, a turn of the road brought us in sight of a neat country seat. I could just distinguish the forms of a lady and two young girls in the portico, and I saw my little comrades, with Bantam, Carlo, and old John, trooping along the carriage road. I leaned out of the coach window, in hopes of witnessing the happy meeting, but a grove of trees shut it from my sight.

In the evening we reached a village where I had determined to pass the night. As we drove into the great gateway of the inn, I saw on one side the light of a rousing kitchen fire beaming through a window. I entered, and admired, for the hundredth time, that picture of con-

venience, neatness, and broad, honest enjoyment, the kitchen of an English inn. It was of spacious dimensions, hung round with copper and tin vessels highly polished, and decorated here and there with a Christmas green. Hams, tongues, and flitches of bacon were suspended from the ceiling; a smoke-jack ³⁵ made its ceaseless clanking beside the fireplace, and a clock ticked in one corner. A well-scoured deal table extended along one side of the kitchen, with a cold round of beef and other hearty viands upon it, over which two foaming tankards of ale seemed mounting guard. Travellers of inferior order were preparing to attack this stout repast, while others sat smoking and gossiping over their ale on two high-backed oaken settles beside the fire. Trim housemaids were hurrying backwards and forwards under the directions of a fresh bustling landlady; but still seizing an occasional moment to exchange a flippanant word and have a rallying laugh with the group round the fire. The scene completely realized Poor Robin's humble idea of the comforts of mid-winter:

“ Now trees their leafy hats do bare
To reverence Winter's silver hair;
A handsome hostess, merry host,
A pot of ale now and a toast,
Tobacco and a good coal fire,
Are things this season doth require.”

I had not been long at the inn when a post-chaise drove up to the door. A young gentleman stepped out, and by the light of the lamps I caught a glimpse of a countenance which I thought I knew. I moved forward to get a nearer view, when his eye caught mine. I was

not mistaken; it was Frank Bracebridge, a sprightly, good-humoured young fellow, with whom I had once travelled on the Continent. Our meeting was extremely cordial, for the countenance of an old fellow-traveller always brings up the recollection of a thousand pleasant scenes, odd adventures, and excellent jokes. To discuss all these in a transient ³⁶ interview at an inn was impossible; and finding that I was not pressed for time, and was merely making a tour of observation, he insisted that I should give him a day or two at his father's country seat, to which he was going to pass the holidays, and which lay at a few miles' distance. "It is better than eating a solitary Christmas dinner at an inn," said he, "and I can assure you of a hearty welcome in something of the old-fashioned style." His reasoning was cogent, and I must confess the preparation I had seen for universal festivity and social enjoyment had made me feel a little impatient of my loneliness. I closed, therefore, at once, with his invitation; the chaise drove up to the door, and in a few moments I was on my way to the family mansion of the Bracebridges.

NOTES

1. *The Stage Coach*. He gives us a sympathetic visitor's observations on one of the most characteristic features of English life of the times.
2. *Christmas*. Again he is tempted to describe the elements which go to make up a good old-fashioned English Christmas.
3. *impending feast*, the Christmas dinner. Christmas is the season of gifts.
4. *birch*, the scholastic instrument of castigation.
5. *sisters*. The writer is given to sentiment.
6. *Bucephalus*, the celebrated war-horse of Alexander the Great.
7. *Christmas greens*, the plants associated with Christmas-tide, e.g. holly.
8. *He is always*. Note the change to the historic present, for greater vividness of description.

9. *the fraternity*, the brotherhood of stage-coach drivers.
10. *mystery*, an old word meaning "craft".
11. *hard feeding*, heavy meals.
12. *potations of malt liquors*. The writer is desirous of minimizing the intemperate habits of the driver, and does so by using rather grand-sounding words. This is called *Euphemism*.
13. *knowingly knotted*, tied in a striking and clever knot.
14. *jockey-boots*, long riding-boots.
15. *propriety of person*, state of being carefully groomed.
16. *consequence*, importance.
17. *the cattle*, the horses.
18. *rolls*, strolls leisurely with a swagger.
19. *battering on*. They get such food and drink as may be left over, or which they may pick up.
20. *oracle*, prodigy of wisdom.
21. *cant phrases*, clever occasional remarks in his colloquial language.
22. *jockey lore*, knowledge of horses and racing.
23. *embryo*, "in the making".
24. *pleasing serenity*. The author is in sympathy with the Christmas season of universal good-will.
25. *a world of*, numerous.
26. *billet-doux*, love letter.
27. *blooming*, pretty and healthy.
28. *juntos*, groups.
29. *cyclops*, the blacksmith's assistants. According to classical mythology the Cyclopes were the forgers of thunderbolts for Zeus, the chief of the gods; or, as some held, the assistants of Vulcan, who had his forge under Mount Etna.
30. *sooty spectre*, the dirty, unrecognizable assistant.
31. *the asthmatic engine*, the bellows make a noisy sound as the air is exhaled.
32. *wears the breeches*. It would appear that in old days ivy was more particularly the Christmas decoration favoured by women: "Ivy is soft and meek of speech". Aubrey informs us that in Oxfordshire the maidservant asked a man for ivy to decorate the house; if he failed to bring it the maids nailed up a pair of his breeches. The allusion is probably to this custom.
33. *superannuated*, so old as to be past work.
34. *with a feeling*, again the introduction of sentiment.
35. *a smoke-jack*, an apparatus for turning a roasting-spit, fixed in a chimney and set in motion by the current of air passing up this.
36. *transient*, passing.

No. 11.—Walking Tours

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

Stevenson was born in Edinburgh in 1850 and studied law at Edinburgh University. His earlier works include *A Lodging for the Night*, *An Inland Voyage*, *Travels with a Donkey*, and in 1881 a collection of his essays appeared under the title of *Virginibus Puerisque*. The same year saw *Treasure Island*. In 1886 appeared *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, followed by *Kidnapped*, *The Master of Ballantrae* and *Catriona*, and the unfinished *Weir of Hermiston*. He wrote also verse, and *A Child's Garden of Verses* contains some of his most characteristic poetry. He died in 1894.

Stevenson's work reveals his own charming personality. He never lost his boyishness, and delighted in weaving fancies and making up stories, to satisfy his "much-inventing spirit". He delighted in the open-air life and the beauties of nature. Himself an artist, his writings are full of the colours of nature. He celebrates both in prose and verse his joy in "the broad road that stretches and the roadside fire"; and reveals his easy camaraderie and healthy optimism.

Widely read in literature his writings betray his catholic taste. The influence of the books of his childhood, *The Pilgrim's Progress* and the *Bible*, on his style is easily traceable. But he studied closely the art of expression; and by steady practice and constant dissatisfaction with his efforts he made himself one of the greatest writers of English. Few writers have found more frequently than did Stevenson the "inevitable" word.

It must not be imagined that a walking tour, as some would have us fancy, is merely a better or worse way

of seeing the country. There are many ways of seeing landscape ¹ quite as good; and none more vivid, in spite of canting dilettantes, ² than from a railway train. But landscape on a walking tour is quite accessory. He who indeed is of the brotherhood ³ does not voyage in quest of the picturesque, but of certain jolly humours ⁴ —of the hope and spirit with which the march begins at morning, and the peace and spiritual repletion of the evening's rest. He cannot tell whether he puts his knapsack on, or takes it off, with more delight. The excitement of the departure puts him in key for that of the arrival. Whatever he does is not only a reward in itself, but will be further rewarded ⁵ in the sequel; and so pleasure leads on to pleasure in an endless chain. It is this that so few can understand; they will either be always lounging or always at five miles an hour; they do not play off the one against the other, prepare all day for the evening, and all evening for the next day. And, above all, it is here that your overwalker fails of comprehension. His heart rises against those who drink their curaoa ⁶ in liqueur glasses, when he himself can swill it in a brown john. ⁷ He will not believe that the flavour is more delicate in the smaller dose. He will not believe that to walk this unconscionable distance is merely to stupefy and brutalize himself, and come to his inn, at night, with a sort of frost on his five wits, ⁸ and a starless night of darkness in his spirit. Not for him the mild luminous ⁹ evening of the temperate walker! He has nothing left of man but a physical need for bedtime and a double nightcap; ¹⁰ and even his pipe, if he be a smoker, will be savourless and disenchanted. ¹¹ It is the fate of such an

one to take twice as much trouble as is needed to obtain happiness, and miss the happiness in the end; he is the man of the proverb, in short, who goes further and fares worse.

Now, to be properly enjoyed, a walking tour should be gone upon alone.¹² If you go in a company, or even in pairs, it is no longer a walking tour in anything but name; it is something else and more in the nature of a picnic. A walking tour should be gone upon alone, because freedom is of the essence; because you should be able to stop and go on, and follow this way or that, as the freak¹³ takes you; and because you must have your own pace, and neither trot alongside a champion walker, nor mince¹⁴ in time with a girl. And then you must be open to all impressions and let your thoughts take colour from what you see. You should be as a pipe for any wind to play upon. "I cannot see the wit," says Hazlitt,¹⁵ "of walking and talking at the same time. When I am in the country I wish to vegetate, like the country"—which is the gist of all that can be said upon the matter. There should be no cackle of voices at your elbow, to jar on the meditative silence of the morning. And so long as a man is reasoning¹⁶ he cannot surrender himself to that fine intoxication that comes of much motion in the open air, that begins in a sort of dazzle and sluggishness of the brain, and ends in a peace that passes¹⁷ comprehension.

During the first day or so of any tour there are moments of bitterness, when the traveller feels more than coldly toward his knapsack, when he is half in a mind to throw it bodily over the hedge, and, like Christian¹⁸ on a similar occasion, "give three leaps and go on singing". And

yet it soon acquires a property of easiness. It becomes magnetic; the spirit of the journey enters into it. And no sooner have you passed the straps over your shoulder than the lees of sleep are cleared from you, you pull yourself together with a shake, and fall at once into your stride. And surely, of all possible moods, this, in which a man takes the road, is the best. Of course, if he *will* keep thinking of his anxieties, if he *will* open the merchant Abudah's chest¹⁹ and walk arm-in-arm with the hag—why wherever he is, and whether he walk fast or slow, the chances are that he will not be happy. And so much the more shame to himself! There are perhaps thirty men setting forth at that same hour, and I would lay a large wager there is not another dull face among the thirty. It would be a fine thing to follow, in a coat of darkness,²⁰ one after another of these wayfarers, some summer morning, for the first few miles upon the road. This one, who walks fast, with a keen look in his eyes is all concentrated in his own mind; he is up at his loom,²¹ weaving and weaving, to set the landscape to words. This one peers about, as he goes, among the grasses; he waits by the canal to watch the dragon-flies; he leans on the gate²² of the pasture, and cannot look enough upon the complacent kine. And here comes another, talking, laughing, and gesticulating to himself. His face changes from time to time, as indignation flashes from his eyes or anger clouds his forehead. He is composing articles, delivering orations, and conducting the most impassioned interviews, by the way. A little farther on, and it is as like as not he will begin to sing. And well for him, supposing him to be no great master in that art, if he stumble across

no stolid peasant at a corner; for on such occasion, I scarcely know which is the more troubled, or whether it is worse to suffer the confusion of your troubadour,²³ or the unfeigned alarm of your clown.²⁴ A sedentary population, accustomed, besides, to the strange mechanical bearing²⁵ of the common tramp, can in no wise explain to itself the gaiety of these passers-by. I knew one man who was arrested as a runaway lunatic, because, although a full-grown person with a red beard, he skipped as he went like a child. And you would be astonished if I were to tell you all the grave and learned heads who have confessed to me that, when on walking tours, they sang—and sang very ill—and had a pair of red ears²⁶ when, as described above, the inauspicious²⁷ peasant plumped into their arms from round a corner. And here, lest you think I am exaggerating, is Hazlitt's own confession, from his essay *On Going a Journey*, which is so good that there should be a tax levied on all who have not read it.

“Give me the clear blue sky over my head,” says he, “and the green turf beneath my feet, a winding road²⁸ before me, and a three hours' march to dinner—and then to thinking! It is hard if I cannot start some game on these lone heaths. I laugh, I run, I leap, I sing for joy.”

Bravo! After that adventure of my friend with the policeman, you would not have cared, would you, to publish that in the first person? But we have no bravery nowadays, and, even in books, must all pretend to be dull and foolish as our neighbours. It was not so with Hazlitt. And notice how learned he is (as, indeed, throughout the essay) in the theory of walking tours. He is none

of your athletic men in purple stockings, who walk their fifty miles a day; three hours' march is his ideal. And then he must have a winding road, the epicure!

Yet there is one thing I object to in these words of his, one thing in the great master's practice that seems to me not wholly wise. I do not approve of that leaping and running. Both of these hurry the respiration; they both shake up the brain out of its glorious open-air confusion; and they both break the pace. Uneven walking is not so agreeable to the body, and it distracts and irritates the mind. Whereas, when once you have fallen into an equable stride, it requires no conscious thought from you to keep it up, and yet it prevents you from thinking earnestly of anything else. Like knitting, like the work of a copying clerk, it gradually neutralizes and sets to sleep the serious activity of the mind. We can think of this or that, lightly and laughingly, as a child thinks, or as we think in a morning doze; we can make puns or puzzle out acrostics, and trifle in a thousand ways with words and rhymes; but when it comes to honest work, when we come to gather ourselves together for an effort, we may sound the trumpet as loud and long as we please; the great barons of the mind ²⁹ will not rally to the standard, but sit, each one, at home, warming his hands over his own fire and brooding on his own private thought!

In the course of a day's walk, you see, there is much variance in the mood. From the exhilaration of the start, to the happy phlegm of the arrival, the change is certainly great. As the day goes on, the traveller moves from one extreme toward the other. He becomes more

and more incorporated with the material landscape and the open-air drunkenness³⁰ grows upon him with great strides, until he posts along the road, and sees everything about him, as in a cheerful dream. The first is certainly brighter, but the second stage is more peaceful. A man does not make so many articles towards the end, nor does he laugh aloud; but the purely animal pleasures, the sense of physical wellbeing, the delight of every inhalation, of every time the muscles tighten down the thigh, console him for the absence of the others and bring him to his destination still content.

Nor must I forget to say a word on bivouacs. You come to a milestone on a hill, or some place where deep ways meet under trees; and off goes the knapsack, and down you sit to smoke a pipe in the shade. You sink into yourself,³¹ and the birds come round and look at you; and your smoke dissipates upon the afternoon under the blue dome of heaven; and the sun lies warm upon your feet, and the cool air visits your neck and turns aside your open shirt. If you are not happy, you must have an evil conscience. You may dally as long as you like by the roadside. It is almost as if the millennium were arrived, when we shall throw our clocks and watches over the housetop, and remember time and seasons no more. Not to keep hours for a lifetime is, I was going to say, to live for ever. You have no idea, unless you have tried it, how endlessly long is a summer's day, that you measure out only by hunger, and bring to an end only when you are drowsy. I know a village where there are hardly any clocks, where no one knows more of the days of the week than by a sort of instinct for the fête on

Sundays,³² and where only one person can tell you the day of the month, and she is generally wrong; and if people were aware how slow Time journeyed in that village, and what armfuls of spare hours he gives, over and above the bargain, to its wise inhabitants, I believe there would be a stampede out of London, Liverpool, Paris, and a variety of large towns, where the clocks lose their heads,³³ and shake the hours out each one faster than the other, as though they were all in a wager. And all these foolish pilgrims would each bring his own misery along with him, in a watch-pocket. It is to be noticed, there were no clocks and watches in the much-vaunted days before the flood. It follows, of course, there were no appointments, and punctuality was not yet thought upon. "Though ye take from a covetous man all his treasure," says Milton,³⁴ "he has yet one jewel left; ye cannot deprive him of his covetousness." And so I would say of a modern man of business, you may do what you will for him, put him in Eden, give him the elixir³⁵ of life—he has still a flaw at heart, he still has his business habits. Now, there is no time when business habits are more mitigated than on a walking tour. And so during these halts, as I say, you will feel almost free.

But it is at night, and after dinner, that the best hour comes. There are no such pipes to be smoked as those that follow a good day's march; the flavour of the tobacco is a thing to be remembered, it is so dry and aromatic, so full and so fine. If you wind up³⁶ the evening with grog, you will own there was never such grog; at every sip a jocund tranquillity spreads about your limbs, and sits easily in your heart. If you read a book—and you

will never do so save by fits and starts—you find the language strangely racy³⁷ and harmonious; words take a new meaning; single sentences possess the ear for half an hour together; and the writer endears himself to you, at every page, by the nicest³⁸ coincidence of sentiment. It seems as if it were a book you had written yourself in a dream. To all we have read on such occasions we look with special favour. “It was on the 10th of April, 1798,” says Hazlitt, with amorous precision,³⁹ “that I sat down to a volume of the *New Héloïse*,⁴⁰ at the Inn at Llangollen,⁴¹ over a bottle of sherry and a cold chicken.” I should wish to quote more, for though we are mighty fine fellows nowadays, we cannot write like Hazlitt. And, talking of that, a volume of Hazlitt’s essays would be a capital pocket-book on such a journey; so would a volume of Heine’s songs;⁴² and for *Tristram Shandy*⁴³ I can pledge a fair experience.

If the evening be fine and warm, there is nothing better in life than to lounge before the inn door in the sunset, or lean over the parapet of the bridge, to watch the weeds and the quick fishes. It is then, if ever, that you taste Joviality⁴⁴ to the full significance of that audacious word. Your muscles are so agreeably slack, you feel so clean and so strong and so idle, that whether you move or sit still, whatever you do is done with pride and a kingly sort of pleasure. You fall in talk with anyone, wise or foolish, drunk or sober. And it seems as if a hot walk purged you, more than of anything else, of all narrowness and pride, and left curiosity to play its part freely, as in a child or a man of science. You lay aside all your hobbies, to watch provincial humours⁴⁵ develop

themselves before you, now as a laughable farce, and now grave and beautiful like an old tale.

Or perhaps you are left to your own company for the night, and surly weather imprisons you by the fire. You may remember how Burns,⁴⁶ numbering past pleasures, dwells upon the hours when he had been "happy thinking." It is a phrase that may well perplex a poor modern, girt about on every side by clocks and chimes, and haunted, even at night, by flaming dial-plates.⁴⁷ For we are all so busy, and have so many far-off projects to realise, and castles in the fire⁴⁸ to turn into solid habitable mansions on a gravel soil,⁴⁹ that we can find no time for pleasure trips into the Land of Thought and among the Hills of Vanity. Changed times, indeed, when we must sit all night, beside the fire, with folded hands; and a changed world for most of us, when we find we can pass the hours without discontent, and be happy thinking. We are in such haste to be doing, to be writing, to be gathering gear,⁵⁰ to make our voice audible a moment in the derisive silence⁵¹ of eternity, that we forget that one thing, of which these are but the parts—namely, to live. We fall in love, we drink hard, we run to and fro upon the earth like frightened sheep. And now you are to ask yourself if, when all is done, you would not have been better to sit by the fire at home, and be happy thinking. To sit still and contemplate—to remember the faces of women without desire, to be pleased by the great deeds of men without envy, to be everything and everywhere, in sympathy, and yet content to remain where and what you are—is not this to know both wisdom and virtue, and to dwell with happiness? After all, it is not they

who carry flags,⁵² but they who look upon it from a private chamber, who have the fun of the procession. And once you are at that,⁵³ you are in the very humour of all social heresy.⁵⁴ It is no time for shuffling,⁵⁵ or for big, empty words. If you ask yourself what you mean by fame, riches, or learning, the answer is far to seek; and you go back into that kingdom of light imaginations, which seem so vain in the eyes of Philistines⁵⁶ perspiring after wealth, and so momentous to those who are stricken⁵⁷ with the disproportions of the world, and, in the face of the gigantic stars, cannot stop to split differences between two degrees of the infinitesimally small, such as a tobacco pipe or the Roman Empire, a million of money or a fiddlestick's end.

You lean from the window, your last pipe reeking⁵⁸ whitely into the darkness, your body full of delicious pains, your mind enthroned in the seventh circle⁵⁹ of content; when suddenly the mood changes, the weather-cock goes about, and you ask yourself one question more: whether for the interval, you have been the wisest philosopher or the most egregious of donkeys?⁶⁰ Human experience is not yet able to reply; but at least you have had a fine moment, and looked down upon all the kingdoms of the earth. And whether it was wise or foolish, to-morrow's travel will carry you, body and mind, into some different parish of the infinite.

NOTES

1. *many ways of seeing landscape*. Scott viewed it on horseback; Dr. Johnson and Ruskin preferred a carriage.

2. *canting dilettantes*, men who dabble in art for amusement and, without knowing much about it, fight strenuously for purity in art.

For example, Ruskin thought that railways would destroy the beauties of Nature.

3. *of the brotherhood*, a true lover of walking tours.
4. *humours*, mental and spiritual experiences.
5. *be further rewarded*, have a beneficial after-effect.
6. *drink their curaçoa*. Liqueurs like curaçoa should be taken in very small glasses.
7. *brown john*, meaning a large tankard, perhaps of earthenware. He is thinking of the demi-john.
8. *a frost on his five wits*. Stevenson employs a concrete and vivid figure of speech to make his meaning absolutely clear. This is also Shakespeare's practice.
9. *luminous*, implying comfort and happiness.
10. *double nightcap*, a double drink of liquor before retiring to rest.
11. *disenchanted*, incapable of inducing pleasing thoughts.
12. *alone*. But contrast Sterne's remark at the beginning of No. 20: "Give me a companion by the way, if it be only to remark how the shadows lengthen as the sun declines."
13. *freak*, sudden fancy.
14. *mince*; Stevenson as usual secures the inevitable word.
15. *Hazlitt*. Born 1778, died 1830. Essayist and critic. Wrote *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays*, *Lectures on English Poetry*, *Lectures on Comic Writers*. Stevenson, who quotes from his essay *On going a Journey*, is a great admirer of Hazlitt's style.
16. *reasoning*, endeavouring to follow the conversation of his companions.
17. *peace that passes*. Frequently Stevenson's phrases are reminiscent of the Bible and Prayer Book.
18. *like Christian*. Stevenson was greatly influenced by Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, which he revered as "a book which breathes of every valuable and beautiful emotion."
19. *Abudah's chest*, referring to a tale in Ridley's *Tales of the Genii*, of a merchant who, was haunted by an old hag until he obeyed God and reformed his ways. Stevenson's allusions frequently take us off to the land of romance.
20. *a coat of darkness*; referring to the nursery tale of Jack the Giant-killer, who found such a coat of great help to him.
21. *at his loom*. Stevenson's own habit. "As I walked," he tells us in an early essay, "my mind was busy fitting what I saw with appropriate words; when I sat by the roadside, a pencil and penny version-book would be in my hand, to note down the features of the scene."
22. *leans on the gate*. Cf. Davies:

'What is this life if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare!'

23. *troubadour*, a minstrel of the Middle Ages; here, any singer.
24. *clown*, rustic.
25. *mechanical bearing*. The professional tramp trudges slowly onwards, empty of thoughts and interests.
26. *red ears*, i.e. they blushed profusely.
27. *inauspicious*, unexpected and therefore inconvenient.
28. *winding road*, so that the view may change constantly.
29. *barons of the mind*. We are like the feudal king summoning his barons, who refuse to come.
30. *open-air drunkenness*. He has referred earlier to "that fine intoxication that comes of much motion in the open air".
31. *sink into yourself*, lose yourself in thoughts; the cares of the world depart. Note the effect of the repetition of "and" in this sentence.
32. *fête on Sundays*. On the Continent Sunday is the weekly holiday, and fêtes or festivals are held on that day.
33. *the clocks lose their heads*, time goes fast, because of the feverish haste of business.
34. *Milton* (1608-74), the great poet of the seventeenth century, author of many beautiful poems, and of the great epic *Paradise Lost*. The quotation is from *Areopagitica*, an attack upon press censorship.
35. *elixir*, a cordial which prolongs life.
36. *wind up*, finish.
37. *racy*, lively and pleasing.
38. *niciest*, exactest.
39. *amorous precision*, loving exactness.
40. *Héloïse*, a novel by the French writer Rousseau, whose works influenced so greatly the French revolutionaries and the English romanticists.
41. *Llangollen*, in north Wales.
42. *Heine's songs*. Heine (1799-1866) was a German poet who wrote lyrics full of the joy of life.
43. *Tristram Shandy*, by Sterne (1713-68), who also wrote *A Sentimental Journey Through France*. Both works sparkle with wit. Stevenson owes something to Sterne in respect of style.
44. *Joviality*. Jove, or Jupiter, was the chief of the gods in classical mythology. Thus, the word here means "the imperial mood of contentment with the world".
45. *provincial humours*, the characteristics of the country people.
46. *Burns* (1759-96), Scottish poet of the people. Wrote *Tam o' Shanter*, *The Cottar's Saturday Night*, *Highland Mary*, *The Twa Dogs*, and many beautiful songs and lyrics. The allusion is to one verse in his *Rigs o' Barley*:

" I hae been blythe wi' comrades dear;
I hae been merry drinking;
I hae been joyfu' gathering gear;
I hae been happy thinking."

47. *flaming dial-plates*, brightly illuminated clock-towers.
48. *castles in the fire*, plans seen when gazing into the burning coals; a variant of castles in the air, or in Spain.
49. *a gravel soil*, bringing us back to a foundation of reality, when possible builders prefer to erect their houses on a gravel soil, as being healthy.
50. *gathering gear*; see Burns' verse, quoted above; acquiring possessions.
51. *derisive silence*, because eternity laughs at our littleness.
52. *carry flags*, take a prominent part in the procession.
53. *you are at that*, you accept that point of view.
54. *social heresy*, revolt against the conventions of society.
55. *shuffling*, hiding the truth from ourselves by plausible arguments.
56. *Philistines*, the enemies of the Jews, described in the Old Testament of the Bible; but Stevenson uses the word in the manner of Matthew Arnold, to define the enemies of culture and art, the utilitarian and materialistic Victorians.
57. *stricken*, awestruck.
58. *reeking*, smoking.
59. *seventh circle*, referring to the seven spheres of heaven of the old beliefs.
60. *most egregious of donkeys*, a perfect ass.

No. 12.—Child's Play

R. L. STEVENSON

Stevenson never lost his boyishness, and he borrows from his own childish experience the devices by which the weariness of pain and solitude may be cheated.

The regret we have for our childhood is not wholly justifiable: so much a man may lay down without fear of public ribaldry;¹ for although we shake our heads over the change, we are not unconscious of the manifold advantages of our new state. What we lose in generous impulse, we more than gain in the habit of generously watching others; and the capacity to enjoy Shakespeare² may balance a lost aptitude for playing at soldiers.³ Terror is gone out of our lives, moreover; we no longer see the devil in the bed-curtains nor lie awake to listen to the wind. We go to school no more; and if we have only exchanged one drudgery⁴ for another (which is by no means sure), we are set free for ever from the daily fear of chastisement. And yet a great change has overtaken us; and although we do not enjoy ourselves less, at least we take our pleasure differently. We need pickles⁵ nowadays to make Wednesday's cold mutton please our Friday's appetite; and I can remember the time when to call it red venison,⁶ and tell myself a hunter's story, would

have made it more palatable than the best of sauces. To the grown person, cold mutton is cold mutton all the world over; not all the mythology ever invented by man will make it better or worse to him; the broad fact, the clamant reality, of the mutton carries away before it such seductive figments. But for the child it is still possible to weave an enchantment over eatables; and if he has but read of a dish in a story-book, it will be heavenly manna ⁷ to him for a week.

If a grown man does not like eating and drinking and exercise, if he is not something positive in his tastes, it means he has a feeble body and should have some medicine; but children may be pure spirits, if they will, and take their enjoyment in a world of moonshine.⁸ Sensation does not count for so much in our first years as afterwards; something of the swaddling numbness of infancy clings about us; we see and touch and hear through a sort of golden mist. Children, for instance, are able enough to see, but they have no great faculty for looking; they do not use their eyes for the pleasure of using them, but for by-ends of their own; and the things I call to mind seeing most vividly, were not beautiful in themselves, but merely interesting or enviable to me as I thought they might be turned to practical account in play. Nor is the sense of touch so clean and poignant in children as it is in a man. If you will turn over your memories, I think the sensations of this sort you remember will be somewhat vague, and come to not much more than a blunt, general sense of heat on summer days, or a blunt, general sense of well-being in bed. And here, of course, you will understand pleasurable sensations; for

overmastering pain—the most deadly and tragical element in life, and the true commander of man's soul and body—alas . . . pain has its own way with all of us; it breaks in, a rude visitant, upon the fairy garden⁹ where the child wanders in a dream, no less surely than it rules upon the field of battle, or sends the immortal war-god whimpering to his father; and innocence, no more than philosophy, can protect us from this sting. As for taste, when we bear in mind the excesses of unmitigated sugar which delight a youthful palate, “it is surely no very cynical asperity” to think taste a character of the maturer growth. Smell and hearing are perhaps more developed; I remember many scents, many voices, and a great deal of spring singing in the woods. But hearing is capable of vast improvement as a means of pleasure; and there is all the world between gaping wonderment at the jargon of birds, and the emotion with which a man listens to articulate music.¹⁰

At the same time, and step by step with this increase in the definition and intensity of what we feel which accompanies our growing age, another change takes place in the sphere of intellect, by which all things are transformed and seen through theories and associations as through coloured windows. We make to ourselves day by day, out of history, and gossip, and economical speculations, and God knows what, a medium in which we walk and through which we look abroad. We study shop windows with other eyes than in our childhood, never to wonder, not always to admire, but to make and modify our little incongruous theories about life. It is no longer the uniform of a soldier that arrests our

attention but perhaps the flowing carriage of a woman, or perhaps a countenance that has been vividly stamped with passion, and carries an adventurous story written in its lines. The pleasure of surprise is passed away; sugar-loaves and water-carts ¹¹ seem mighty tame to encounter; and we walk the streets to make romances and to sociologise. Nor must we deny that a good many of us walk them solely for the purposes of transit or in the interest of a livelier digestion. These, indeed, may look back with mingled thought upon their childhood, but the rest are in a better case; they know more than when they were children, they understand better, their desires and sympathies answer more nimbly to the provocation of the senses, and their minds are brimming with interest as they go about the world.

According to my contention, this is a flight to which children cannot rise. They are wheeled in perambulators or dragged about by nurses in a pleasing stupor. A vague, faint, abiding wonderment possesses them. Here and there some specially remarkable circumstance, such as a water-cart or a guardsman,¹² fairly penetrates into the seat of thought and calls them, for half a moment, out of themselves; and you may see them, still towed forward sideways by the inexorable nurse as by a sort of destiny, but still staring at the bright object in their wake. It may be some minutes before another such moving spectacle reawakens them to the world in which they dwell. For other children, they almost invariably show some intelligent sympathy. "There is a fine fellow making mud pies," they seem to say; "that I can understand, there is some sense in mud pies." But the doings of their elders,

unless where they are speaking picturesque or recommend themselves by the quality of being easily imitable, they let them go over their heads (as we say) without the least regard. If it were not for this perpetual imitation we should be tempted to fancy they despised us outright, or only considered us in the light of creatures brutally strong and brutally silly; among whom they condescended to dwell in obedience like a philosopher at a barbarous court. At times, indeed they display an arrogance of disregard that is truly staggering. Once, when I was groaning aloud with physical pain, a young gentleman came into the room and nonchalantly inquired if I had seen his bow and arrow. He made no account of my groans, which he accepted, as he had to accept so much else, as a piece of the inexplicable conduct of his elders; and like a wise young gentleman, he would waste no wonder on the subject. Those elders, who care so little for rational enjoyment,¹³ and are even the enemies of rational enjoyment, for others, he had accepted without understanding and without complaint, as the rest of us accept the scheme of the universe.

We grown people can tell ourselves a story, give and take strokes until the bucklers¹⁴ ring, ride far and fast, marry, fall, and die, all the while sitting quietly by the fire or lying prone in bed. This is exactly what a child cannot do, or does not do, at least, when he can find anything else. He works all with lay figures¹⁵ and stage properties. When his story comes to the fighting, he must rise, get something by way of a sword and have a set-to with a piece of furniture, until he is out of breath. When he comes to ride with the king's pardon,¹⁶ he must bestride a chair,

which he will so hurry and belabour, and on which he will so furiously demean himself, that the messenger will arrive, if not bloody with spurring, at least fiery red with haste. If his romance involves an accident upon a cliff, he must clamber in person about the chest of drawers and fall bodily upon the carpet, before his imagination is satisfied. Lead soldiers, dolls, all toys, in short, are in the same category and answer the same end. Nothing can stagger a child's faith; he accepts the clumsiest substitutes and can swallow the most staring incongruities. The chair he has been besieging as a castle, or valiantly cutting to the ground as a dragon, is taken away for the accommodation of a morning visitor, and he is nothing abashed; he can skirmish by the hour with a stationary coal-scuttle; in the midst of the enchanted pleasance,¹⁷ he can see, without sensible shock, the gardener soberly digging potatoes for the day's dinner. He can make abstraction of whatever does not fit into his fable; and he puts his eyes into his pocket, just as we hold our noses in an unsavoury lane.

And so it is, that although the ways of children cross with those of their elders in a hundred places daily, they never go in the same direction nor so much as lie in the same element. So may the telegraph wires intersect the line of the highroad, or so might a landscape painter and a bagman¹⁸ visit the same country, and yet move in different worlds.

People struck with these spectacles cry aloud about the power of imagination in the young. Indeed there may be two words to that. It is, in some ways, but a pedestrian fancy that the child exhibits. It is grown people who make

the nursery stories; all the children do, is jealously to preserve the text. One out of a dozen reasons why *Robinson Crusoe* ¹⁹ should be so popular with youth, is that it hits their level in this matter to a nicety; Crusoe was always a makeshift and had, in so many words, to play at a great variety of professions; and then the book is all about tools, and there is nothing that delights a child so much. Hammers and saws belong to a province of life that positively calls for imitation. The juvenile lyrical drama of the most ancient Thespian ²⁰ model, wherein the trades of mankind are successively simulated to the running burthen ²¹ "On a cold and frosty morning", gives a good instance of the artistic taste in children. And this need for overt action and lay figures testifies to a defect in the child's imagination which prevents him from carrying out his novels in the privacy of his own heart. He does not yet know enough of the world and men. His experience is incomplete. That stage-wardrobe and scene-room that we call the memory is so ill-provided, that he can overtake few combinations and body out few stories, to his own content, without some external aid. He is at the experimental stage; he is not sure how one would feel in certain circumstances; to make sure, he must come as near trying it as his means permit. And so here is young heroism with a wooden sword, and mothers practise ²² their kind vocation over a bit of jointed stick. It may be laughable enough just now; but it is these same people and these same thoughts, that not long hence, when they are on the theatre of life, will make you weep and tremble. For children think very much the same thoughts and dream the same dreams as bearded men and marriageable women.

No one is more romantic. Fame and honour, the love of young men and the love of mothers, the business man's pleasure in method, all these and others they anticipate and rehearse in their hours. Upon us, who are further advanced and fairly dealing²³ with the threads of destiny, they only glance from time to time to glean a hint for their mimetic reproduction. Two children playing at soldiers are far more interesting to each other than one of the scarlet beings²⁴ whom both are busy imitating. This is perhaps the greatest oddity of all. "Art for art" is their motto; and the doings of grown folk are only interesting as the raw material for play. Not Theophile Gautier,²⁵ not Flaubert,²⁶ can look more callously upon life, or rate the reproduction more highly over the reality; and they will parody an execution, a deathbed, or the funeral of the young man of Nain,²⁷ with all the cheerfulness in the world.

The true parallel for play is not to be found, of course, in conscious art, which, though to be derived from play, is itself an abstract, impersonal thing, and depends largely upon philosophical interests beyond the scope of childhood. It is when we make castles in the air and personate the leading character in our own romances, that we return to the spirit of our first years. Only, there are several reasons why the spirit is no longer so agreeable to indulge. Nowadays when we admit this personal element into our divagations we are apt to stir up uncomfortable and sorrowful memories, and remind ourselves sharply of old wounds. Our day dreams can no longer lie all in the air like a story in the *Arabian Nights*;²⁸ they read to us rather like the history of a period in which ourselves had taken part, where we come across many unfortunate passages, and

find our own conduct smartly reprimanded. And then the child, mind you, acts his parts. He does merely repeat them to himself; he leaps, he runs, and sets the blood agog over all his body. And so his play breathes him; and he no sooner assumes a passion than he gives it vent. Alas! When we betake ourselves to our intellectual form of play, sitting quietly by the fire or lying prone in bed, we rouse many hot feelings for which we can find no outlet. Substitutes are not acceptable to the mature mind, which desires the thing itself; and even to rehearse a triumphant dialogue with one's enemy, although it is perhaps the most satisfactory piece of play still left within our reach, is not entirely satisfying, and is even apt to lead to a visit and an interview which may be the reverse of triumphant after all.

In the child's world of dim sensation, play is all in all. "Making believe" is the gist of his whole life, and he cannot so much as take a walk except in character. I could not learn my alphabet without some suitable *mise-en-scène*,²⁹ and had to act a business man in an office before I could sit down to my book. Will you kindly question your memory, and find out how much you did, work or pleasure, in good faith and soberness, and for how much you had to cheat yourself with some invention? I remember, as though it were yesterday, the expansion of spirit, the dignity and self-reliance, that came with a pair of moustachios in burnt cork, even when there were none to see. Children are even content to forego what we call the realities, and prefer the shadow to the substance. When they might be speaking intelligibly together, they chatter senseless gibberish by the

hour, and are quite happy because they are making believe to speak French. I have said already how even the imperious appetite of hunger suffers itself to be gulled and led by the nose with the fag end of an old song. And it goes deeper than this: when children are together even a meal is felt as an interruption in the business of life; and they must find some imaginative sanction and tell themselves some sort of a story, to account for, to colour, to render entertaining, the simple processes of eating and drinking. What wonderful fancies I have heard evolved out of the pattern upon teacups!—from which there followed a code of rules and a whole world of excitement, until tea-drinking began to take rank as a game. When my cousin and I took our porridge of a morning, we had a device to enliven the course of the meal. He ate his with sugar, and explained it to be a country continually buried under snow. I took mine with milk and explained it to be a country suffering gradual inundation. You can imagine us exchanging bulletins; and here was an island still unsubmerged, here a valley not yet covered with snow: what inventions were made; how his population lived in cabins on perches and travelled on stilts, and how mine was always in boats; how the interest grew furious, as the last corner of safe ground was cut off on all sides and grew smaller every moment; and how in fine, the food was of altogether secondary importance, and might even have been nauseous, so long as we seasoned it with these dreams. But perhaps the most exciting moments I ever had over a meal, were in the case of calves'-feet jelly. It was hardly possible not to believe—and you may be sure, so far

from trying, I did all I could to favour the illusion—that some part of it was hollow, and that sooner or later my spoon would lay open the secret tabernacle of the golden rock. There, might some miniature *Red Beard* await his hour; there, might one find the treasures of the *Forty Thieves*,³⁰ and bewildered Cassim beating about the walls. And so I quarried on slowly, with bated breath, savouring the interest.³¹ Believe me, I had little palate left for the jelly; and though I preferred the taste when I took cream with it, I used often to go without, because the cream dimmed the transparent fractures.

Even with games, this spirit is authoritative with right-minded children. It is thus that hide-and-seek has so pre-eminent a sovereignty, for it is the well-spring of romance, and the actions and the excitement to which it gives rise lend themselves to almost any sort of fable. And thus cricket, which is a mere matter of dexterity, palpably about nothing, and for no end, often fails to satisfy infantile craving. It is a game, if you like, but not a game of play. You cannot tell yourself a story about cricket; and the activity it calls forth can be justified on no rational theory. Even football, although it admirably simulates the tug and the ebb and flow of battle, has presented difficulties to the mind of young sticklers after verisimilitude; and I knew at least one little boy who was mightily exercised about the presence of the ball, and had to spirit himself up, whenever he came to play, with an elaborate story of enchantment, and take the missile as a sort of talisman bandied about in conflict between two Arabian nations.

To think of such a frame of mind is to become dis-

quieted about the bringing up of children. Surely they dwell in a mythological epoch, and are not the contemporaries of their parents. What can they think of them? What can they make of these bearded or petticoated giants who look down ³² upon their games? who move upon a cloudy Olympus,³³ following unknown designs apart from rational enjoyment? who profess the tenderest solicitude for children, and yet every now and again reach down out of their altitude and terribly vindicate the prerogatives of age? ³⁴ Off goes the child, corporally smarting, but morally rebellious. Were there ever such unthinkable deities as parents? I would give a great deal to know what, in nine cases out of ten, is the child's feeling. A sense of past cajolery; a sense of personal attraction, at best very feeble; above all, I should imagine, a sense of terror for the untried residue of mankind: go to make up the attraction that he feels. No wonder, poor little heart, with such a weltering world in front of him, if he clings to the hand he knows! The dread irrationality of the whole affair, as it seems to children, is a thing we are all too ready to forget. "Oh, why," I remember passionately wondering, "why can we not all be happy and devote ourselves to play?" And when children do philosophise, I believe it is usually to very much the same purpose.

One thing, at least, comes very clearly out of these considerations: that whatever we are to expect at the hands of children, it should not be any peddling ³⁵ exactitude about matters of fact. They walk in a vain show, and among mists and rainbows; they are passionate after dreams and unconcerned about realities; speech is a

difficult art not wholly learned; and there is nothing in their own tastes or purposes to teach them what we mean by abstract truthfulness. When a bad writer is inexact, even if he can look back on half a century of years, we charge him with incompetence and not with dishonesty. And why not extend the same allowance to imperfect speakers? Let a stockbroker be dead stupid about poetry, or a poet inexact in the details of business, and we excuse them heartily from blame. But show us a miserable, unbreached human entity, whose whole profession it is to take a tub for a fortified town and a shaving-brush for the deadly stiletto, and who passes three-fourths of his time in a dream and the rest in open self-deception, and we expect him to be as nice³⁶ upon a matter of fact as a scientific expert bearing evidence. Upon my heart, I think it less than decent. You do not consider how little the child sees, or how swift he is to weave what he has seen into bewildering fiction; and that he cares no more for what you call truth, than you for a gingerbread dragoon.³⁷

I am reminded, as I write, that the child is very inquiring as to the precise truth of stories. But indeed this is a very different matter, and one bound up with the subject of play, and the precise amount of playfulness, or playability, to be looked for in the world. Many such burning questions must arise in the course of nursery education. Among the fauna of this planet, which already embraces the pretty soldier and the terrifying Irish beggar-man, is, or is not, the child to expect a Bluebeard or a Cormoran?³⁸ Is he, or is he not, to look out for magicians, kindly and potent? May he, or may he not,

reasonably hope to be cast away upon a desert island, or turned to such diminutive proportions that he can live on equal terms with his lead soldiery, and go a cruise in his own toy schooner? Surely all these are practical questions to a neophyte entering upon life with a view to play. Precision upon such a point, the child can understand. But if you merely ask him of his past behaviour, as to who threw such a stone, for instance, or struck such and such a match; or whether he had looked into a parcel or gone by a forbidden path—why, he can see no moment in the inquiry, and it is ten to one, he has already half forgotten and half-bemused himself with subsequent imaginings.

It would be easy to leave them in their native cloud-land, where they figure so prettily—pretty like flowers and innocent like dogs. They will come out of their gardens soon enough and have to go into offices and the witness-box. Spare them yet a while, O conscientious parent! Let them doze among their playthings yet a little! for who knows what a rough, warfaring existence lies before them in the future.

NOTES

1. *public ribaldry*, being laughed at by everybody.
2. *Shakespeare* (1564–1616), the greatest English dramatist.
3. *playing at soldiers*. Cf. his poem *The Land of Counterpane*:

“ I watched my leaden soldiers go,
With different uniforms and drills,
Amongst the bed-clothes, through the hills.”

4. *drudgery*, the daily round, the common task of life.
5. *need pickles*, the natural healthy appetite of childhood is lost; and we try to find it again by the use of pickles, &c.
6. *red venison*, the deer's flesh which was the staple food of the adventurous hunters of the western prairies of North America, about

whom many stirring boys' stories were written by Fenimore Cooper, Ballantyne, and others. In the introductory verses to *Treasure Island* Stevenson has written:

" If studious youth no longer crave,
His ancient appetites forgot,
Kingston, or Ballantyne the brave,
Or Cooper of the wood and wave:
So be it, also! And may I
And all my pirates share the grave
Where these and their creations lie!"

7. *heavenly manna*, the most acceptable of food. God fed the Israelites with manna when they were wandering in the desert. (*Exodus*, Chap. xvi.)

8. *world of moonshine*, world of fancy and imagination.

9. *upon the fairy garden*. Stevenson recalls the pain which came to drive away his childish dreams.

10. *articulate music*, the ordered compositions of great musicians.

11. *water-carts*, used to lay the dust in the streets of large towns, and were a perennial source of pleasure to the city child.

12. *guardsman*, in his gorgeous uniform.

13. *rational enjoyment*; i.e. as the boy conceives it.

14. *bucklers*, shields.

15. *lay figures*, the boy makes use of inanimate objects to represent the personages of his stories.

16. *the king's pardon*, the exciting climax of many stories for boys.

17. *pleasance*, beautiful garden.

18. *a bagman*, a commercial traveller.

19. *Robinson Crusoe*, by Daniel Defoe (1659-1731), who had the extraordinary gift of making things fictitious seem true. He was sixty years of age when, in 1719, his immortal masterpiece was published.

20. *Thespian*. Thespis was a Greek poet, believed to be the inventor of tragedy. He lived in the sixth century B.C., and went from town to town upon a cart, on which was erected a temporary stage, where two actors entertained the audience with choral songs.

21. *running burthen*, the recurring chorus or refrain. This refrain occurs also in the childish game *Nuts in May*.

22. *mothers practise*, little girls play with wooden dolls.

23. *fairly dealing*, fully conscious of the seriousness of life.

24. *scarlet beings*, uniformed soldiers.

25. *Théophile Gautier* (1811-72), a French writer, novelist and poet. His works have much imagery and humour; but he has been accused of "indifference" to humanity.

26. *Flaubert*, also a French writer (1821-80). He led the nineteenth century novelists forward from the land of romance, and

made realism possible. His greatest novel is *Madame Bovary*, published in 1857. Cf. note to No. 17, page 154.

27. *young man of Nain*, whom Jesus Christ raised from the dead. The story is told in *St. Luke*, chap. vii.

28. *Arabian Nights*. Antoine Galland, a Frenchman, born 1646, went to Constantinople in the diplomatic service of his country. He was keenly interested in Oriental learning and literature, and collected the folk-tales of India, Persia and the Near East into a volume entitled *The Thousand and One Nights*: more generally known as the *Arabian Nights' Entertainments*, and containing some of the most popular tales in literature, e.g. Sindbad the Sailor, Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves, Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp.

29. *mise-en-scène*, getting up a dramatic piece.

30. *Forty Thieves*, one of the most popular tales from the *Arabian Nights' Entertainments* is "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves".

31. *savouring the interest*, extracting the full flavour of my fancies.

32. *look down*. Literally, of course, as children usually play on the floor.

33. *Olympus*, the home of the gods.

34. *the prerogatives of age*, such as, ordering a child off to bed.

35. *peddling*, meticulous.

36. *as nice*, as careful, particular.

37. *gingerbread dragoon*. Gingerbread is a species of cake beloved by children. Often it is baked in shapes, e.g. of soldiers or dragoons.

38. *Cormoran*, the Cornish giant, killed by Jack the Giant-killer.

No. 13.—Might is Right

SIR WALTER RALEIGH

Professor Raleigh was born in 1861, and educated at London and Cambridge. After a short term as professor at Aligarh, he went successively to the universities of Liverpool, Glasgow, and Oxford as Professor of English Literature, and filled the chair at Oxford with great distinction from 1904 until his sudden and premature death in 1922.

His chief works are: *The English Novel*, *Robert Louis Stevenson*, *Style*, *Milton*, *Wordsworth*, *Shakespeare* (for the "English Men of Letters Series"), *Essays on Johnson*, *Romance*.

Raleigh's own style is delightful. A great admirer of Stevenson, he no doubt caught from him and earlier models of English prose the knack of ease of expression, the simple lucidity which is so hard to achieve, the gift of the "inevitable word" which marks off the great writer from the merely good. In this essay we discern, however, in addition to these qualities, clear logic, with a humour which changes sometimes into irony, and an underlying earnestness.

It is now recognized in England that our enemy in this war¹ is not a tyrant military caste,² but the united people of modern Germany. We have to combat an armed doctrine which is virtually the creed of all Germany. Saxony and Bavaria,³ it is true, would never have invented the doctrine; but they have accepted it from Prussia,⁴ and they believe it. The Prussian doctrine⁵ has paid the German people handsomely; it has given them their

place in the world. When it ceases to pay them, and not till then, they will reconsider it. They will not think, till they are compelled to think. When they find themselves face to face with a greater and more enduring strength than their own, they will renounce their idol, but they are a brave people, a faithful people, and a stupid people, so that they will need rough proofs.⁶ They cannot be driven from their position by a little paper shot. In their present mood, if they hear an appeal to pity, sensibility, and sympathy, they take it for a cry of weakness. I am reminded of what I once heard said by a genial and humane Irish officer concerning a proposal to treat with the leaders of a Zulu rebellion.⁷ "Kill them all," he said, "it's the only thing they understand." He meant that the Zulu chiefs would mistake moderation for a sign of fear. By the irony of human history this sentence has become almost true of the German people, who built up the structure⁸ of modern metaphysics. They can be argued with only by those who have the will and the power to punish them.

The doctrine that Might is Right, though it is true, is an unprofitable doctrine, for it is true only in so broad and simple a sense that no one would dream of denying it. If a single nation can conquer, depress, and destroy all the other nations of the earth and acquire for itself a sole dominion, there may be matter for question whether God approves that dominion; what is certain is that He permits it. No earthly governor who is conscious of his power will waste time in listening to arguments concerning what his power ought to be. His right to wield the sword can be challenged only by the sword.

An all-powerful governor who feared no assault would never trouble himself to assert that Might is Right. He would smile and sit still. The doctrine, when it is propounded by weak humanity, is never a statement of abstract truth; it is a declaration of intention, a threat, a boast, an advertisement. It has no value except when there is some one to be frightened. But it is a very dangerous doctrine when it becomes the creed of a stupid people, for it flatters their self-sufficiency, and distracts their attention from the difficult, subtle, frail, and wavering⁹ conditions of human power. The tragic question for Germany to-day is what she can do, not whether it is right for her to do it. The buffaloes,¹⁰ it must be allowed, had a perfect right to dominate the prairie of America, till the hunters came. They moved in herds, they practised shock-tactics,¹¹ they were violent, and very cunning. There are but few of them now. A nation of men who mistake violence for strength, and cunning for wisdom, may conceivably suffer the fate of the buffaloes, and perish without knowing why.

To the English mind the German political doctrine is so incredibly stupid that for many long years, while men in high authority in the German Empire, ministers, generals, and professors, expounded that doctrine at great length and with perfect clearness, hardly any one could be found in England to take it seriously, or to regard it as anything but the vapourings¹² of a crazy sect. England knows better now; the scream of the guns has awakened her. The German doctrine is to be put to the proof. Who dares to say what the result will be? To predict certain failure to the German arms is only

a kind of boasting. Yet there are guarded beliefs which a modest man is free to hold till they are seen to be groundless. The Germans have taken Antwerp;¹³ they may possibly destroy the British fleet, overrun England and France, repel Russia, establish themselves as the dictators of Europe—in short, fulfil their dreams. What then? At an immense cost of human suffering they will have achieved, as it seems to us, a colossal and agonizing failure. Their engines of destruction will never serve them to create anything so fair as¹⁴ the civilization of France. Their uneasy jealousy and self-assertion is a miserable substitute for the old laws of chivalry and regard for the weak, which they have renounced and forgotten. The will and high permission of all-ruling Heaven may leave them at large for a time, to seek evil to others. When they have finished with it, the world will have to be remade.

We cannot be sure that the Ruler of the world will forbid this. We cannot even be sure that the destroyers, in the peace that their destruction will procure for them, may not themselves learn to rebuild. The Goths,¹⁵ who destroyed the fabric of the Roman Empire, gave their name, in time, to the greatest mediæval art. Nature, it is well known, loves the strong, and gives to them, and to them alone, the chance of becoming civilized. Are the German people strong enough to earn that chance? That is what we are to see. They have some admirable elements of strength, above any other European people. No other European army can be marched in close order, regiment after regiment, up the slope of a glaxis,¹⁶ under the fire of machine guns, without flinching, to certain death. This corporate courage and corporate

discipline is so great and impressive a thing that it may well contain a promise for the future. Moreover, they are, within the circle of their own kin, affectionate and dutiful beyond the average of human society. If they succeed in their worldly ambitions, it will be a triumph of plain brute morality¹⁷ over all the subtler movements of the mind and heart.

On the other hand, it is true to say that history shows no precedent for the attainment of world-wide power by a people so politically stupid as the German people are to-day. There is no mistake about this; the instances of German stupidity are so numerous that they make something like a complete history of German international relations. Here is one. Any time during the last twenty years it has been matter of common knowledge in England that one event, and one only, would make it impossible for England to remain a spectator in a European war—that event being the violation of the neutrality of Holland or Belgium. There was never any secret about this, it was quite well known to many people who took no special interest in foreign politics. Germany has maintained in this country, for many years, an army of spies and secret agents; yet not one of them has informed her of this important truth. Perhaps the radical difference between the German and the English political system blinded the astute agents. In England nothing really important is a secret, and the amount of privileged political information to be gleaned in barbers' shops,¹⁸ even when they are patronized by civil servants, is distressingly small. Two hours of sympathetic conversation with an ordinary Englishman would have told the German

Chancellor more about English politics than ever he heard in his life. For some reason or other he was unable to make use of this source of intelligence, so that he remained in complete ignorance of what every one in England knew and said.

Here is another instance. The programme of German ambition has been voluminously published for the benefit of the world. France was first to be crushed; then Russia; then, by means of the indemnities¹⁹ procured from these conquests, after some years of recuperation and effort, the naval power of England was to be challenged and destroyed. This programme was set forth by high authorities, and was generally accepted; there was no criticism, and no demur. The crime against the civilization of the world foreshadowed in the horrible words "France is to be crushed" is before a high tribunal;²⁰ it would be idle to condemn it here. What happened is this. The French and Russian part of the programme was put into action last July. England, who had been told that her turn²¹ was not yet, that Germany would be ready for her in a matter of five or ten years, very naturally refused to wait her turn. She crowded up on to the scaffold,²² which even now is in peril of breaking down under the weight of its victims, and of burying the executioner²³ in its ruins. But because England would not wait her turn, she is overwhelmed with accusations of treachery and inhumanity by a sincerely indignant Germany. Could stupidity, the stupidity of the wise men of Gotham,²⁴ be more fantastic or more monstrous?

German stupidity was even more monstrous. A part of the accusation against England is that she has raised

her hand against the nation nearest to her in blood. The alleged close kinship of England and Germany is based on bad history and doubtful theory. The English are a very mixed race, with enormous infusions of Celtic ²⁵ and Roman ²⁶ blood. The Roman sculpture gallery at Naples ²⁷ is full of English faces. If the German agents would turn their attention to hatters' shops,²⁸ and give the barbers a rest, they would find that no English hat fits any German head. But suppose we were cousins, or brothers even, what kind of argument is that on the lips of those who but a short time before were explaining, with a good deal of zest and with absolute frankness, how they intended to compass our ruin? There is something almost amiable in fatuity like this. A touch of the fool softens the brute.

The Germans have a magnificent war-machine which rolls on its way, crushing all that it touches. We shall break it if we can. If we fail, the German nation is at the beginning, not the end, of its troubles. With the making of peace, even an armed peace, the war-machine has served its turn; some other instrument of government must then be invented. There is no trace of a design for this new instrument in any of the German shops. The governors of Alsace-Lorraine ²⁹ offer no suggestions. The bald fact is that there is no spot in the world where the Germans govern another race and are not hated. They know this, and are disquieted; they meet with coldness on all hands, and their remedy for the coldness is self-assertion and brag. The Russian statesman was right who remarked that modern Germany has been too early admitted into the comity ³⁰ of European nations. Her

behaviour, in her new international relations, is like the behaviour of an uneasy, jealous upstart in an old-fashioned quiet drawing-room. She has no genius for equality; her manners are a compound of threatening and flattery. When she wishes to assert herself, she bullies; when she wishes to endear herself, she crawls;³¹ and the one device is no more successful than the other.

Might is Right; but the sort of might which enables one nation to govern another in time of peace is very unlike the armoured thrust of the war-engine. It is a power compounded of sympathy and justice. The English (it is admitted by many foreign critics) have studied justice and desired justice. They have inquired into and protected rights that were unfamiliar, and even grotesque, to their own ideas, because they believed them to be rights. In the matter of sympathy their reputation does not stand so high; they are chill in manner, and dislike all effusive demonstrations of feeling. Yet those who come to know them know that they are not unimaginative; they have a genius for equality; and they do try to put themselves in the other fellow's place, to see how the position looks from that side. . . . England has done her best, and does feel a disinterested solicitude for the peoples under her charge. She has long been a mother of nations, and is not frightened by the problems of adolescence.

The Germans have as yet shown no sign of skill in governing other peoples. Might is Right; and it is quite conceivable that they may acquire colonies by violence. If they want to keep them they will have to shut their own professors' books, and study the intimate

history³² of the British Empire. We are old hands at the business; we have lost more colonies than ever they owned, and we begin to think that we have learnt the secret of success. At any rate, our experience has done much for us, and has helped us to avoid failure. Yet the German colonial party stare at us with bovine malevolence. In all the library of German theorizing you will look in vain for any explanation of the fact that the Boers³³ are, in the main, loyal to the British Empire. If German political thinkers could understand that political situation, which seems to English minds so simple, there might yet be hope for them. But they regard it all as a piece of black magic, and refuse to reason about it. How should a herd of cattle be driven without goads? Witchcraft, witchcraft! . . .

Another thing that the Germans will have to learn for the welfare of their much-talked Empire is the value of the lone man. The architects and builders of the British Empire were all lone men. Might is Right; but when a young Englishman is set down at an outpost of Empire to govern a warlike tribe, he has to do a good deal of hard thinking on the problem of political power and its foundations. He has to trust to himself, to form his own conclusions, and to choose his own line of action. He has to try to find out what is in the mind of others. A young German, inured to skilled slavery,³⁴ does not shine in such a position. Man for man, in all that asks for initiative and self-dependence, Englishmen are the better men, and some Germans know it. There is an old jest that if you settle an Englishman and a German together in a new country, at the end of a year you will

find the Englishman governor, and the German his head clerk. A German must know the rules before he can get to work.

More than three hundred years ago a book was written in England which is in some ways a very exact counterpart to General von Bernhardi's³⁵ notorious treatise. It is called *Tamburlaine*,³⁶ and, unlike its successor, is full of poetry and beauty. Our own colonization began with a great deal of violent work, and much wrong done to others. We suffered for our misdeeds, and we learned our lesson, in part at least. Why, it may be asked, should not the Germans begin in the same manner, and by degrees adapt themselves to the new task? Perhaps they may, but if they do, they cannot claim the Elizabethans for their model. Of all men on earth the German is least like the undisciplined, exuberant Elizabethan adventurer.³⁷ He is reluctant to go anywhere without a copy of the rules, a guarantee of support, and a regular pension. His outlook is as prosaic as General von Bernhardi's or General von der Goltz's³⁸ own, and that is saying a great deal. In all the German political treatises there is an immeasurable dreariness. They lay down rules for life, and if they be asked what makes such a life worth living, they are without any hint of an answer. Their world is a workhouse, tyrannically ordered, and full of pusillanimous jealousies.

It is not impious to be hopeful. A Germanized world would be a nightmare. We have never attempted or desired to govern them, and we must not think that God will so far forget them as to permit them to attempt to govern us. Now they hate us, but they do not know for how many years the cheerful brutality of their political

talk has shocked and disgusted us. I remember meeting, in one of the French Mediterranean dependencies,³⁹ with a Prussian nobleman, a well-bred and pleasant man, who was fond of expounding the Prussian creed. He was said to be a political agent of sorts, but he certainly learned nothing in conversation. He talked all the time, and propounded the most monstrous paradoxes with an air of mathematical precision. Now it was the character of Sir Edward Grey,⁴⁰ a cunning Machiavel,⁴¹ whose only aim was to set Europe by the ears⁴² and make neighbours fall out. A friend who was with me, an American, laughed aloud at this, and protested, without producing the smallest effect. The stream of talk went on. 'The error of the Germans, we were told, was always that they are too humane; their dislike of cruelty amounts to a weakness in them. They let France escape⁴³ with a paltry fine, next time France must be beaten to the dust. Always with a pleasant outward courtesy, he passed on to England. England was powerless and decadent, her rule must pass to the Germans. "But we shall treat England rather less severely than France," said this bland apostle of Prussian culture, "for we wish to make it possible for ourselves to remain in friendly relations with other English-speaking peoples." And so on—the whole of the Bernhardi doctrine, explained in quiet fashion by a man whose very debility of mind made his talk the more impressive, for he was simply parroting what he had often heard. No one criticized his proposals, nor did we dislike him. It all seemed too mad; a rather clumsy jest. His world of ideas did not touch our world at any point, so that real talk between us was impossible. He came to see us several

times, and always gave the same mesmerized recital of Germany's policy. The grossness of the whole thing was in curious contrast with the polite and quiet voice with which he uttered his insolences. When I remember his talk I find it easy to believe that the German Emperor and the German Chancellor have also talked in such a manner that they have never had the smallest opportunity of learning what Englishmen think and mean.

While the German doctrine was the plaything merely of hysterical and supersensitive persons, like Carlyle ⁴⁴ and Nietzsche,⁴⁵ it mattered little to the world of politics. An excitable man, of vivid imagination and invalid constitution, like Carlyle, feels a natural predilection for the cult of the healthy brute. Carlyle's English style is itself a kind of epilepsy. Nietzsche was so nervously sensitive that everyday life was an anguish to him, and broke his strength. Both were poets, as Marlowe was a poet, and both sang the song of Power. The brutes of the swamp and the field who gathered round them and listened, found nothing new or unfamiliar in the message of the poets. "This," they said, "is what we have always known, but we did not know that it is poetry. Now that great poets teach it, we need no longer be ashamed of it." So they went away resolved to be twice the brutes that they were before, and they named themselves Culture-brutes.⁴⁶

It is difficult to see how the world, or any considerable part of it, can belong to Germany, till she changes her mind. If she can do that, she might make a good ruler, for she has solid virtues and good instincts. It is her intellect that has gone wrong. Bishop Butler ⁴⁷ was one day

found pondering the problem whether a whole nation can go mad. If he had lived to-day, what would he have said about it? Would he have admitted that that strangest of grim fancies is realized?

It would be vain for Germany to take the world; she could not keep it; nor, though she can make a vast number of people miserable for a long time, could she ever hope to make all the inhabitants of the world miserable for all time. She has a giant's power,⁴⁸ and does not think it infamous to use it like a giant. She can make a winter hideous, but she cannot prohibit the return of spring, or annul the cleansing power of water. Sanity is not only better than insanity; it is much stronger, and Might is Right.

Meantime, it is a delight and a consolation to Englishmen that England is herself again. She has a cause that it is good to fight for, whether it succeed or fail. The hope that uplifts her is the hope of a better world, which our children shall see. She has wonderful friends. From what self-governing nations in the world can Germany hear such messages as came to England from the Dominions oversea? "When England is at war, Canada is at war." "To the last man and the last shilling, Australia will support the cause of the Empire." These are simple words, and sufficient; having said them, Canada and Australia said no more. In the company of such friends, and for the creed that she holds, England might be proud to die; but surely her time is not yet.

Our faith is ours and comes not on a tide:
And whether Earth's great offspring, by decree,
Must rot if they abjure rapacity,

Not argument but effort shall decide.
They number many heads in that hard flock:
Trim swordsmen they push forth: yet try thy teel.
Thou, fighting for poor humankind, wilt feel
The strength of Roland⁴⁹ in thy wrist to hew
A chasm sheer into the barrier rock,
And bring the army of the faithful through.

(George Meredith,⁵⁰ *Sonnet to J. M.*)

NOTES

1. *in this war*. Raleigh is writing in October, 1914.
2. *a tyrant military caste*, since the German army was officered almost exclusively by men of aristocratic birth, of the ruling class.
3. *Saxony, Bavaria*. States in the German Empire.
4. *Prussia*, the dominating State in the German Empire.
5. *the Prussian doctrine*, that Germany must have "a place in the sun". It is the doctrine of total disregard of every factor in life except the advancement of Germany, the doctrine of Might is Right.
6. *rough proofs*, not of argument, but of physical compulsion.
7. *Zulu rebellion*. The Zulus are a brave South African people, who offered a stout resistance to the Dutch and British at the end of last century.
8. *who built up the structure*, because Germany has given to the world some of its greatest philosophers.
9. *difficult, subtle, frail, and wavering*. Note the care in the choice of adjectives.
10. *buffaloes*, the bison of North America.
11. *shock-tactics*, attacking without any attempt to manœuvre, a mass attack.
12. *vapourings*, empty thoughtless talk.
13. *Antwerp*, the Belgian port on the River Scheldt.
14. *so fair as*, so lovely and admirable as.
15. *Goths*, whose original home is uncertain, but was probably along the Baltic sea-board. They spread widely over Europe. We learn first of them historically along the lower Danube. By 476 they had established a kingdom in Spain, while the Danube kingdom extended to the Balkans. In 489 Theodoric from the eastern kingdom became ruler of the western Roman Empire. Gothic architecture was very common in the Middle Ages.
16. *glacis*, bare, unprotected ground in front of modern defences.

17. *brute morality*, because unthinking blind courage and affection which does not extend beyond the narrow family circle are qualities of the brute.

18. *barbers' shops*, where there is much small talk and gossip. Many barbers in England were Germans, possibly spies.

19. *indemnities*, payments by the vanquished to the victor.

20. *before a high tribunal*, the issue of the Great War is in God's hands, He is the Judge.

21. *her turn*, to be defeated.

22. *the scaffold*, where Germany was putting her enemies to death. A figure of speech.

23. *the executioner*, Germany herself.

24. *Gotham*, in Nottinghamshire. In the reign of King John, according to the story, its inhabitants performed many incredibly stupid acts, and by persuading the King that they were fools, avoided punishment.

25. *Celtic blood*, chiefly inherited from the ancient Britons, with whom the Anglo-Saxon invaders intermarried after the settlement.

26. *Roman blood*, since the Romans were in Britain for four hundred years, and some of the legions, or regiments, for long periods of service without returning to Rome.

27. *Naples*, in south Italy.

28. *hatters' shops*. The Germans have square heads (*brachy-cephalic* is the scientific term), while their civilized neighbours in Europe are long-headed (or *dolicho-cephalic*), thus proving that racially the Germans are not Nordic, but the same in race as the Huns, Slavs, and other invaders from the far east. In other words the German is not an "Aryan" at all.

29. *Alsace-Lorraine*, territory along the French bank of the Rhine, but seized by Germany after the Franco-Prussian war of 1870. The point is that the German governors of this occupied territory could not rule the inhabitants with justice.

30. *comity*, fellowship, association.

31. *she crawls*, i.e. flatters abjectly.

32. *intimate history*, the inner, personal side of history.

33. *Boers*. The point is that the Boers fought against Britain for their independence in the South African war of 1899, but have since become loyal colonists.

34. *inured to skilled slavery*, used to obeying orders without question and to the complete satisfaction of the masters.

35. *von Bernhardi*, the author of *Germany and the Next War*, which preached the doctrine of Might is Right.

36. *Tamburlaine*, by Christopher Marlowe (1564-93), a celebrated Elizabethan dramatist, contemporary with Shakespeare. Tamburlaine, the historical Timur, conquered and ruled by force.

37. *adventurer*, one who goes on voyages of discovery.

38. *von der Goltz*, another German military author. His book was called *The Nation in Arms*.

39. *dependencies*, such as Algeria.

40. *Sir Edward Grey*, British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs before and at the outbreak of the Great War. He was born in 1862, and died in 1933.

41. *Machiavel* (1469-1527), an Italian statesman who wrote a political treatise, *The Prince*, which sought to justify cunning, dissimulation, and dishonesty in a ruler.

42. *set Europe by the ears*, engineer a quarrel amongst the nations of Europe.

43. *let France escape*, after the Franco-Prussian war.

44. *Carlyle* (1795-1881), like R. L. Stevenson and Sir Walter Scott, a Scotsman, historian and essayist, who found guidance in Goethe and other Germans, and is the prophet of the modern greatness of that nation. His chief works are *Life of Schiller*, *Sartor Resartus*, *The French Revolution*, *Heroes and Hero-worship*, *Past and Present*, *Letters and Speeches of Cromwell* and *Frederick the Great*.

45. *Nietzsche*, a German philosopher, who wrote of the "super-man", a being with none of the mortal defects of pity, sympathy, humanity, altruism.

46. *Culture-brutes*, the advocates of the German *Kultur*.

47. *Bishop Butler*, eighteenth-century theologian, who wrote his *Analogy of Natural and Revealed Religion* in 1736.

48. *giant's power*, from Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*, II, ii, 107:

" . . . it is excellent

To have a giant's strength; but it is tyrannous

To use it like a giant."

49. *the strength of Roland*. Roland was one of the chivalric heroes of the old French *Chansons de Geste*, which became, in the eleventh century, the epics of Charlemagne and his peers.

50. *George Meredith* (1828-1909), English novelist and poet. His chief works are *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel*, *The Egoist*, *Beauchamp's Career*, *Diana of the Crossways*, *The Shaving of Shagpat*, *Evan Harrington*, in prose, and *Love in the Valley*, *Modern Love*, and many short pieces, in verse.

No. 14.—My First Flight

H. G. WELLS

Mr. Wells, born 1866, began his work in literature with wildly fantastic scientific stories, such as *The War of the Worlds*, *The Invisible Man*, *The Food of the Gods*, &c. His later novels deal with the modern world, and many of them are of great, though probably not abiding, interest. Of these the best are *Kipps*, *Mr. Polly*, *Love and Mr. Lewisham*, *Tono-Bungay*, *The New Machiavelli*. Wells had plenty of humour, wrote with a view to ameliorate social conditions, and possessed the gift of depicting character. In this essay he betrays his interest in modern developments in science; and conveys to us perhaps better than anyone else has done the exhilaration of one's first flight. His took place in August, 1912.

The style of Wells lacks the purity of some of his predecessors. He is very often colloquial, and his expression frequently journalistic, designed to appeal readily to "the man in the street".

Hitherto my only flights had been flights of imagination,¹ but this morning I flew. I spent about ten or fifteen minutes in the air; we went out to sea,² soared up, came back over the land, circled higher, planed steeply down to the water, and I landed with the conviction that I had had only the foretaste of a great store of hitherto unsuspected pleasures. At the first chance I will³ go up again, and I will go higher and further.⁴

This experience has restored all the keenness of my

ancient interest in flying, which had become a little fagged and flat by too much hearing and reading; about the thing and not enough participation. Sixteen years ago, in the days of Langley⁵ and Lilienthal,⁶ I was one of the few journalists who believed and wrote that flying was possible—it affected my reputation unfavourably, and produced in the few discouraged pioneers of those days a quite touching gratitude. Over my mantel as I write hangs a very blurred and bad but interesting photograph that Professor Langley sent me sixteen years ago. It shows the flight of the first piece of human machinery heavier than air that ever kept itself up for any length of time. It was a model, a little affair that would not have lifted a cat; it went up in a spiral and came down unsmashed, bringing back, like Noah's dove,⁷ the promise of tremendous things.

That was only sixteen years ago, and it is amusing to recall how cautiously even we out-and-out believers did our prophesying. I was quite a desperate⁸ fellow; I said outright that in my lifetime we should see men flying. But I qualified that by repeating that for many years to come it would be an enterprise only for quite fantastic daring and skill. We conjured up stupendous difficulties and risks. I was deeply impressed and greatly discouraged by a paper a distinguished Cambridge mathematician produced to show that a flying machine was bound to pitch fearfully, that as it flew on, its pitching *must* increase until up went its nose, down went its tail, and it fell like a knife. We exaggerated every possibility of instability. We imagined that when the aeroplane wasn't "kicking up ahind and afore"⁹ it would be heeling over, to the

lightest side wind. A sneeze might upset it. We contrasted our poor humble equipment with the instinctive balance of a bird, which has had ten million years of evolution by way of a start. . . .

The waterplane in which I soared over Eastbourne this morning with Mr. Grahame-White¹⁰ was as steady as a motor-car running on asphalt.

Then we went on from those anticipations of swaying insecurity to speculations about the psychological and physiological effects of flying. Most people who look down from the top of a cliff or high tower feel some slight qualms of dread, many feel a quite sickening dread. Even if men struggled high into the air, we asked, wouldn't they be smitten up there by such a lonely and reeling¹¹ dismay as to lose all self-control? And above all, wouldn't the pitching and tossing make them quite horribly seasick?

I have always been a little haunted by that last dread. It gave a little undertow of funk¹² to the mood of lively curiosity with which I got aboard the waterplane this morning—that sort of faint, thin funk that so readily invades one on the verge of any new experience: when one tries one's first dive, for example, or pushes off for the first time down an ice run.¹³ I thought I should very probably be sea-sick—or, to be more precise, air-sick; I thought also that I might be very giddy, and that I might get thoroughly cold and uncomfortable. None of those things happened.

I am still in a state of amazement at the smooth steadfastness of the motion. There is nothing on earth to compare with that, unless—and that I can't judge—it is an ice

yacht travelling on perfect ice. The finest motor-car in the world on the best road would be a joggling, quivering thing beside it.

To begin with, we went out to sea before the wind, and the plane would not readily rise. We went with an undulating movement, leaping with a light splashing pat upon the water, from wave to wave. Then we came about ¹⁴ into the wind and rose, and looking over I saw that there were no longer those periodic flashes of white foam. I was flying. And it was as still and steady as dreaming. I watched the widening distance between our floats ¹⁵ and the waves. It wasn't by any means a windless day; there was a brisk, fluctuating breeze blowing out of the north over the downs. It seemed hardly to affect our flight at all.

As for the giddiness of looking down, one does not feel it at all. It is difficult to explain why this should be so, but it is so. I suppose in such matters I am neither exceptionally steady-headed nor is my head exceptionally given to swimming.¹⁶ I can stand on the edge of cliffs of a thousand feet or so and look down, but I can never bring myself right up to the edge nor crane over to look to the very bottom. I should want to lie down to do that. And the other day I was on that Belvidere ¹⁷ place at the top of the Rotterdam ¹⁸ sky-scraper,¹⁹ a rather high wind was blowing, and one looks down, down through the chinks between the boards one stands on upon the heads of the people in the streets below; I didn't like it. But this morning I looked directly down on a little fleet of fishing boats over which we passed, and on the crowds assembling on the beach, and on the bathers who stared up at us from the breaking surf, with an entirely agreeable exaltation. And

Eastbourne, in the early morning sunshine, had all the brightly detailed littleness of a town viewed from high up on the side of a great mountain.

When Mr. Grahame-White told me we were going to plane down ²⁰ I will confess I tightened my hold on the sides of the car and prepared for something like the down-going sensation of a switchback railway ²¹ on a larger scale. Just for a moment there was that familiar feeling of something pressing one's heart up towards one's shoulders and one's lower jaw up into its socket and of grinding one's lower teeth against the upper, and then it passed. The nose of the car and all the machine was slanting downwards, we were gliding quickly down, and yet there was no feeling that one rushed, not even as one rushes in coasting ²² a hill on a bicycle. It wasn't a tithe of the thrill of those three descents one gets on the great mountain railway ²³ in the White City.²⁴ There one gets a disagreeable quiver up one's backbone from the wheels, and a real sense of falling.

It is quite peculiar to flying that one is incredulous of any collision. Some time ago I was in a motor-car that ran over and killed a small dog, and this wretched little incident has left an open wound upon my nerves. I am never quite happy in a car now; I can't help keeping an apprehensive eye ahead. But you fly with an exhilarating assurance that you cannot possibly run over anything or run into anything—except the land or the sea, and even those large essentials seem a beautifully safe distance away.

I had heard a great deal of talk about the deafening uproar of the engine. I counted a headache among my

chances. There again reason reinforced conjecture. When in the early morning Mr. Travers came from Brighton²⁵ in this Farman²⁶ in which I flew I could hear the hum of the great insect when it still seemed abreast of Beachy Head,²⁷ and a good two miles away. If one can hear a thing at two miles, how much the more will one not hear it at a distance of two yards? But at the risk of seeming too contented for anything I will assert I heard that noise no more than one hears the drone of an electric ventilator upon one's table. It was only when I came to speak to Mr. Grahame-White, or he to me, that I discovered that our voices had become almost infinitesimally small.

And so it was I went up into the air at Eastbourne with the impression that flying was still an uncomfortable, experimental, and slightly heroic thing to do, and came down to the cheerful gathering crowd upon the sands with the knowledge that it is a thing achieved for everyone. It will get much cheaper, no doubt, and much swifter and be improved in a dozen ways—we *must* get self-starting engines,²⁸ for example, for both our aeroplanes and motor-cars—but it is available to-day for anyone who can reach it. An invalid lady of seventy could have enjoyed all that I did if only one could have got her into the passenger's seat. Getting there was a little difficult, it is true; the waterplane was out in the surf, and I was carried to it on a boatman's back, and then had to clamber carefully through the wires, but that is a matter of detail. This flying is indeed so certain to become a general experience that I am sure that this description will in a few years seem almost as quaint as if I had set myself to record the fears and sensations of my First Ride in a

Wheeled Vehicle. And I suspect that learning to control a Farman waterplane now is probably not much more difficult than, let us say, twice the difficulty in learning the control and management of a motor-bicycle. I cannot understand the sort of young man who won't learn how to do it if he gets half a chance.²⁹

The development of these waterplanes is an important step towards the huge and swarming popularization of flying which is now certainly imminent. We ancient survivors of those who believed in and wrote about flying before there was any flying used to make a great fuss about the dangers and difficulties of landing and getting up. We wrote with vast gravity about "starting-rails" and "landing-stages," and it is still true that landing an aeroplane, except upon a well-known and quite level expanse, is a risky and uncomfortable business. But getting up and landing upon fairly smooth water is easier than getting into bed. This alone is likely to determine the aeroplane routes³⁰ along the line of the world's coast-lines and lake groups and waterways. The airmen will go to and fro over water as the midges³¹ do. Wherever there is a square mile of water the waterplanes will come and go like hornets at the mouth of their nest. But there are much stronger reasons than this convenience for keeping over water. Over water the air, it seems, lies in great level expanses; even when there are gales it moves in uniform masses like the swift, still rush of a deep river. The airman, in Mr. Grahame-White's phrase, can go to sleep on it. But over the land, and for thousands of feet up into the sky, the air is more irregular than a torrent among rocks; it is—if only we could see it—a waving, whirling,

eddy, flamboyant confusion. A slight hill, a ploughed field, the streets of a town, create riotous, rolling, invisible streams and cataracts of air that catch the airman unawares, make him drop disconcertingly, try his nerves. With a powerful enough engine he climbs at once again, but these sudden downfalls are the least pleasant and most dangerous experience in aviation. They exact a tiring vigilance.

Over lake or sea, in sunshine, within sight of land, this is the perfect way of the flying tourist. Gladly would I have set out for France this morning instead of returning to Eastbourne. And then coasted round to Spain and into the Mediterranean. And so by leisurely stages to India. And the East Indies. . . .

I find my study unattractive³² to-day.

NOTES

1. *flights of imagination*, in his fantastic early novels.
2. *out to sea*, the English Channel. The flight took place at Eastbourne in Sussex.
3. *will*, more correctly "shall".
4. *further*, more correctly "farther".
5. *Langley*, an early American experimenter in flying.
6. *Lilienthal*, an early German experimenter with "gliders".
7. *Noah's dove*. *Genesis*, chap. viii, verses 10, 11:
- "And he (Noah) stayed yet other seven days; and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark; And the dove came in to him in the evening; and, lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf, plucked off: so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth."
8. *desperate*, i.e. in his outspoken prophecies.
9. *afore*, in front.
10. *Mr. Grahame-White*, one of the early successful fliers.
11. *reeling*, giving one vertigo and dizziness.
12. *undertow of funk*, undercurrent of fear and cowardice. "Funk" has not yet secured a place in standard English prose.
13. *an ice run*, referring to one of the most popular of the winter sports in Switzerland, tobogganing down an ice run.
14. *came about*, turned: a nautical expression, so many of which find their way into English standard prose.

15. *our floats*, the buoyant apparatus upon which the seaplane rests on the surface of the water.

16. *swimming*, giddiness.

17. *Belvidere*, a building standing rather high, open on every side, and thus providing a beautiful view.

18. *Rotterdam*, the chief commercial town and port in Holland.

19. *sky-scraper*, an American term for a very high building such as may be seen in New York.

20. *to plane down*, to stop the engines and glide down to earth.

21. *switchback railway*, the toy railway with its precipitous descents which is so popular a feature at exhibitions, fairs, and shows.

22. *coasting*, rushing downhill with the feet free of the pedals. The author is thinking of the days before the free-wheel.

23. *mountain railway*, one of the switchback railways referred to above.

24. *White City*, a more or less permanent exhibition in the west of London. The buildings are chiefly white.

25. *Brighton*, on the coast of Sussex, near Eastbourne.

26. *Farman*, the type of seaplane invented by the Farman brothers, pioneers of flying.

27. *Beachy Head*, a headland on the coast of Sussex.

28. *self-starting engines*, the author, it is to be remembered, is writing in the year 1912.

29. *half a chance*, another rather colloquial phrase.

30. *the aeroplane routes*: the author has prophesied falsely, not being able to foresee the marvellous development of engine power, enabling planes to reach even the most distant landing-places in one "hop".

31. *midges*, mosquitoes.

32. *unattractive*, after the mood of exaltation and exhilaration.

No. 15.—Birds and Their Enemies

E. V. LUCAS

Edward Verrall Lucas was born in 1868 and educated at University College, London. In addition to many volumes of essays he has published *The Open Road* (1899), *Highways and Byways in Sussex* (1904), three pleasant descriptive books of travel, *A Wanderer in Holland*, *A Wanderer in London*, and *A Wanderer in Paris*, and the *Life, Works and Letters of Charles and Mary Lamb*. The essay *A Funeral* is from *Character and Comedy* (1907).

For the past two weeks I have been watching two nests in the garden—a thrush's¹ and a long-tailed tit's. The thrush built silently and unobserved in a box tree,² the first news we had of the nest being the noisy departure of the old bird as someone moved too near. Providence surely (one cannot help thinking) having done so much for birds, might have gone a step further and gifted them with the knowledge that when in danger it is better to lie low³ than to bustle away. However, off the thrush flew, and revealed five eggs. A day or so later the young birds hatched out.

The long-tailed tits worked entirely without secrecy. They sought their building site almost ostentatiously, and, having settled upon it, conveyed their materials thither under our very eyes. Lichen⁴ from the apple

trees formed the outer wall, and the lining was chiefly feathers from other birds, but whether picked up casually or fought for I know not. The building operations lasted about ten days; and then came the eggs; and then, as I had foreseen from the beginning, the tragedy. For these foolish birds had set up their home in the hedge that runs by the footpath, in itself a ridiculous enough thing, and then, nominally for protective purposes, I suppose, had used a lichen that did not in the least correspond with the surrounding colour. All this I could have told them, but man is never so helpless ⁵ as in his relations with birds. Perhaps it would have been kinder to destroy the nest's foundations at once; but only very strong people ⁶ can be kind like that. All that was done was to call a committee ⁷ to inquire into the means of hiding in some way the positively clamorous ⁸ visibility of the nest. We walked up and down the path re-arranging the branches. Finally, we decided that such matters are best left to Fate.

Fate, however, does not seem to think much of birds, for when, after an absence of two or three days, I went to see the nest again, every trace of it had vanished. Some village boys on a Sunday afternoon foray (Sunday afternoon being the deadliest time ⁹ for all accessible creatures in these parts) had torn the nest bodily from the hedge, and it is probably now on a neighbour's mantelpiece! So much for the toil of two weeks and the maternal solicitude of a week longer, and so much for my reputation ¹⁰ as a gentleman among long-tailed tits.

I then went on to the thrush's nest, and behold! it lay on the ground, under the box tree, with one young bird dead beside it. Later, John, the odd man,¹¹ told the story:

he had heard that morning an unusual noise in the direction of the nest, and had even stopped work (that extreme measure!) to see what it was; he found nothing, but could now tell that a cat must have attacked the birds, and the old one have done her best to repulse it, but without success.

Two tragedies in as many days, two families destroyed, two beautiful natural processes brought to nothing!

Of the two depredators the cat is the more monstrous, because a boy unthinkingly, by a kind of sense of duty as a boy, takes a nest whenever he finds it, a cat mercilessly and deliberately marks a nest down, watches the growth of the young birds, and strikes at the precise moment when they are as big as they can be without flying. I am not blaming the cat—that would be absurd; but I am vexed with her for making my position as an oracle¹² (to the young) so difficult this morning. For the story is not yet all told. I have to add that when the young thrushes were still babies, and before the long-tailed tit had laid at all, a little girl was brought here, and I was glad to be able to show her the nests and say something about the beautiful ways of Nature. That was all right; but this morning she came in again and was for seeing¹³ how both broods had progressed, and I had, of course, to tell her of our losses. So far as the tits were concerned the case presented little difficulty, for it comes naturally to even a little girl to think but lightly of the enormities of “horrid boys” (as we called them). But the cat? We have the misfortune to keep a cat here, and to be very fond of it, and the odds are quite heavy¹⁴ that it was this identical cat that consumed the thrushes and destroyed the nest. Under that im-

pression the little girl refused to take any notice of the cat, nor could she understand how we can possibly continue to give such a creature love and shelter. She asked me the most direct questions on the matter, and I had no answers, and now I am a dishonoured thing.

And truly, the whole thing is rather a puzzle. Why should a cat that is properly fed, and has its will of the mice,¹⁵ eat the birds of the air? Why should boys be unable to permit a bird to hatch out its eggs in peace? The law of the survival of the fittest¹⁶ hardly applies, for surely a thrush is as fit as a cat, and a long-tailed tit as fit as a boy. I know a dozen boys at least whom I would willingly exchange for the intimacy of a pair of these birds. Of course, it is all right, really. We all prey on one another, and all in turn are preyed upon. Probably those young thrushes had each eaten some scores of very estimable and life-loving worms; probably the tits had slain insects by the thousand, and equally probably our cat will one night be caught in a trap, and that village boy will enlist and some day fall on a battlefield, with a Mauser bullet¹⁷ through his heart. A life for a life, says Nature. And yet one is puzzled still. When man opened the door to let humanity in, he let in a host of doubts and misgivings at the same time.

This is not our only tragedy. There is just now at the farm a little brood of ducklings, who move about ever in a solid phalanx¹⁸—a little yellow cloud which, though seven ducks compose it, you could at any time cover with a dinner napkin. I never saw such mobilization.¹⁹ If unity were really strength, this company should be capable of anything. So one might think; and yet the

contrary is the fact, for the motive which leads to this excessive gregariousness is not aggression but fear. Collectively, seven yellow ducklings, with weakly twittering beaks and foolishly limp necks, are no stronger than one; but collectively their courage is greater; and just now they need courage or stimulation very badly. Because of the rats. A day or so ago the little band numbered nine, then it numbered eight, now seven, and to-morrow there may be only six. Hence there is something very pathetic in the sight of these fearful little brothers and sisters crowding against each other in their broad-day passage from one side of the yard to the other. If they feel thus when the sun shines, how must their little hearts beat at night! Their fear of rats cannot, I think, be more intense than mine. Rats are to me what snakes are to timid people in a snake country or tarantulas in a tarantula country. The rat idea has a kindred hold on me, and has had ever since at school I first heard Southey's²⁰ ballad of Bishop Hatto.²¹ The irresistibility of that army of rats swimming nearer and nearer to the castle in the river, and then up and up the stairs. . . . The rat is so terrible and so unclean. There is the story of the cornered rat that leaps for your throat.

I met a rat a short time ago. I was descending a little hill, and he was climbing it, both of us in the middle of the road. I stood still and permitted him to pass—a great, surly, wicked, intent grandfather. A personified sin might easily have been figured thus. And yet a rat's private life, a rat's thoughts and conversation, may be far more wholesome than a rabbit's. (We don't really know anything.) Yet a thousand rabbits might play on the floor

of my bedroom all night, and be hanged to them, while if a single rat so much as scratched beneath the flooring, I would lose all sleep and all peace of mind. Such is association. Such is the rat idea. And such is the basis of my grief for those luckless ducklings.

The ducklings, thrushes, and tits are not the only miniature things that are finding life too hard a nut. Old John, on his way back from dinner the other day, found a cat in the midst of that ghastly game which cats play with their victims. The victim in this case was a baby rabbit. By a sudden movement John rescued the little creature and brought it to us. To transpose a box into a hutch was, as the novelists say, the work of an afternoon, and the rabbit was placed within it, together with some grass and some milk. But either the nervous shock, or the frequency with which callers came to the hutch to make inquiries, was too much for it, and the next morning its poor little body was cold. A rabbit that could recover from a cat's persecution would, indeed, have an organization of iron.

The memory of the bright light of fear that inhabited that little rabbit's eyes has for the time being removed all my good feelings for cats. Our kitten may frolic and curvet as she will, and twist her tiny body into a thousand attitudes of freakish and fascinating grace, but she leaves me without enthusiasm. I am tired of cats. Their rapacity is too continual, their cruelty too hideous, their beauty too superficial. Give me a plain, blundering, faithful-hearted, and true-eyed dog—a mongrel, even, if you will—before all the Persians²² of the Orient, or so I say to-day.

Not that one is profoundly in love with rabbits. Indeed, I cannot rise properly to the rabbit at all; I can only feel sorry for him. To respect him is impossible: his timidity goes beyond all bounds. Man may well be gratified to cause a stampede now and again among the smaller wild animals of his neighbourhood, but when the same stampede occurs every day among the same family, he deems it too much homage. Rooks can at enormous range distinguish between a walking-stick and a gun, between friend and foe, between Saturday and Sunday.²³ Even sparrows discriminate. But rabbits are just fools. A footstep on the ground three hundred yards away starts them for home, no matter how succulent the greenery²⁴ or how distant the burrow. One almost blushes to think what incredible distances one's punctual and harmless outgoing footfalls cause rabbits to run every morning, and one's returning steps every evening. In our case the warren is hard by the path, and the alarmed rabbit has therefore, in gaining safety, to approach the enemy. "Go back, go back, you little duffers! Finish your feeding and compose yourselves!" one mentally exclaims. But it is to no purpose—here they all come, hundreds of them, in an agony of fear.

A few rabbits attempt courage, but never a one achieves it. They sit up with alert ears and gather together pluck to brave it out; but by the time you are within fifty yards their hearts fail them, and they break for home.²⁵ A frightened rabbit never runs straight: he swerves and swerves. This probably he has learned from experience or tradition, for it baulks the sportsman's aim. Nature never did a crueller thing than when she gave rabbits

white tails: it makes it possible to shoot them long after it is too dark to see any other quarry. "Twinkletails" would be a pretty name for them. One often sees nothing of a rabbit but its flashing scut.²⁶ Naturalists, I believe, are puzzled to account for it, except as an advantage to aiming man.

Young rabbits have far more enterprise than old. Indeed rabbits go off sadly,²⁷ almost as sadly as lambs, which take on stupidity steadily with years. A peculiarity of the young rabbit that is approached from a distance from its abode is to lie still in the fern or grass and sham death or coma. An old rabbit has not wit enough to do even that. One imagines the old rabbit a very treasure-house of counsel and warnings. Man must get a desperately bad character in the warrens.

Our squirrels are less shy than the rabbits. They have more audacity, more grit, more dare-devil. They let us approach within a few feet before moving, and then quick as birds, with tail outspread, they dart to a tree. More often than not the nearest tree: they keep enough composure to select. A squirrel seems never to lose his head; a rabbit almost always does. When a squirrel runs he loops over the ground in the way the sea-serpent travels in pictures. Once the tree is gained he scampers up a yard or two, on the side farthest from the enemy, and then pauses as suddenly as if an enchanter had bidden him turn to stone. Nothing in nature is more motionless than a wary watchful squirrel. He clings to the bark, with cocked head and fearful eyes, a matter of half a minute before climbing to the first fork of the boughs. But to say climbing is a mistake; it is not

climbing; it is just running or, better still, going. A squirrel goes up a tree.

The squirrel of the artist sits on its hindquarters, under the shelter of its tail, and nibbles at the nut which its forepaws hold. The position is, indeed, only one remove from saying grace, and reminds one of the child in Stevenson's²⁸ verse who behaves "mannerly at table". But one does not often catch them in this attitude in the woods. There the squirrel is usually seen making little furtive dashes among the dead leaves on the ground; a tiny red animal, which, were it not for its tail-plume, might be taken at a distance for a rat. Now and then the nursery illustration is realized but only seldom. Squirrels are very ready to be angry, and they are incapable of disguising their feelings. They are voluble as fishwives.²⁹ If you would test the squirrel's powers of repartee you must drive one to the branches of an isolated tree and then rap the trunk with a stick. He will "answer back" as long as you stay there.

One pretty peculiarity touching the squirrel is that we do not associate it with age. We speak of a young rabbit or an old rabbit, a young horse, an old cow, a kitten or a cat, a puppy or a dog; but a squirrel, no matter what its development, is just a squirrel: that is to say, an indescribably wonderful woodland creature, as far removed from our own life and ken as any English animal. The lyrical swiftness of the squirrel partakes of the miraculous; and this, combined with his elusiveness—though he is a thousand strong in the neighbouring wood—makes him a creature apart. Thousands of persons in this country have never seen a squirrel.

The squirrel is in the main invincibly and joyously untameable, although many a man has kept one as a pet. Compared with a squirrel of the beech grove the wildest rabbit is domesticated. But, indeed, beside the squirrel all the four-footed creatures of the field are pedestrian, commonplace. Even the hare, with its incredible celerities, is dull compared with this brilliant aeronaut.³⁰ The squirrel must be emboughed if he is to show in brightest pin. On the ground he is swift and graceful, but his tail impedes instead of assisting him; in a tree, or in mid-air between two trees, he is a miracle of joyous pulsating life, a bird with an additional infusion of nervous fluid, a poem in red fur.

I must now return to the cat. Since where there is a cat there is death, and since you cannot have both birds and a cat, I said that the cat must go. (Her name, by the way, was Bobine Pellicule.³¹ We found it on a packet of photographic films, and deeming it too good to be lost, conferred it on her.) And I was the more certain she must go when that evening she caught a bat and tortured it under a chair in the garden. It was rescued and turned out to be of extraordinary friendliness, neither scratching nor biting, as tradition alleges of it, but drinking milk, and crawling over our hands and across the table in its velvet cloak like a burlesque Hamlet.³² But agreeable as was this rencontre³³ with an animal difficult to get upon terms with, I said again that Bobine must go.

Having said it again, I forgot the matter, leaving the manner of its departure to Fate. Fate settled it with a promptness and thoroughness that took the household by the throat; for the very next morning she jumped

down the well. It is a deep well, and we have no Johnny Stout ³⁴ within call, and death must have been rapid. Nothing but remorse could follow upon such a tragedy, our original idea of getting rid of the cat being by gift. However, it was useless to mourn over so complete a disaster, and we reconciled ourselves to the inevitable, sorry but relieved. And then gradually we began to realize (as the grappling-hooks failed to bring the suicide to the surface) that if a cat were to lay itself out to die with as much inconvenience to its unsympathetic owners as could possibly be arranged, it could not do anything better than just to drown itself in their well. The chain and winch were too light for it to be safe to descend by them; the depth was too great for a ladder to be of any use; Bobine was too slippery for the hooks to catch on. In death this small creature punished my hostility, and punished it increasingly every minute.

To return for a moment to the bats. Chancing to be dining one evening out of doors, I noticed that every now and then, as it grew more dusk, bats were materialized in the most extraordinary sudden way from a corner of the roof. Fetching the glasses, I discovered that our roof at that part was full of them, and they passed in and out under a raised tile. There is nothing swifter or quieter than the way in which bats leave a hole and are instantly on the wing—like young night thoughts.³⁵ I say quieter, but as a matter of fact the attentive ear can hear a little squeaky argument before the flight, as though there was a question of precedence ³⁶ to settle. The bat which the cat played with must have rolled off the roof, having left the home too early.

Birds, of course, are not unmixed blessings. They certainly wake one very early; they pull thatch all to pieces; they eat the buds and they eat the fruit. A pair of dandy bullfinches with an irreproachable tailor³⁷ and perfect manners completely stripped our damson tree of buds two springs ago. The cuckoo, too, is no credit to his race; his arrogance and want of a responsible sense are deplorable, and he sings the same song so many times over that one is ashamed of him. But worse than all are the birds that ruin flowers out of sheer wantonness—a wantonness equal to that of the boys who rob or destroy nests.

I was in the country on the first day of spring this year, and I went at once to a place in the orchard where there are five or six large primrose³⁸ roots. The flowers were all out, as many as twenty or thirty on each root; but when I knelt down to see them I found that almost every head had been snipped off. This is a bird's doing, and I have never learned the purpose of the deed. Can there be some delicate flavour in the neck of the primrose, or is it wanton destructiveness? I believe the scoundrel is a blackbird.

I remember a letter to the *Spectator*³⁹ some years ago, in which a correspondent quoted from the margin to a woodcut⁴⁰ of a bullfinch in an old black-letter⁴¹ Natural History in the library at Hertford College, Oxford, this implacable note in seventeenth-century handwriting: "A smal fowle. He eateth my apple buds in Spring. Kill hym."

Similarly I would indict the blackbird for thus ruining the most beautiful of flowers with his gold dagger of a

bill: "A bold black ravener. He decapitateth my prim-roses. Behead him." And yet would I? Probably not. More likely would I try to emulate my friend Brother Benignus.⁴²

NOTES

1. *Thrush*, one of the best-known of the English birds. Cf. Browning in *Home-Thoughts from Abroad*:

"That's the wise thrush; he sings each song twice over,
Lest you should think he never could recapture
The first fine careless rapture!"

2. *box tree*, a small evergreen tree or shrub, a dwarf variety of which is used for the edgings of flower-beds.

3. *to lie low*, not to move, to remain still and quiet under cover.

4. *lichen*, a sort of moss.

5. *man is never so helpless*; it is seldom that he can get birds to understand, to learn a lesson.

6. *strong people*, in mind and will.

7. *call a committee*, a family council.

8. *clamorous*, asking to be observed.

9. *the deadliest time*; because boys, although free, are not permitted in England to play ordinary games on Sunday, and their idle hands find mischief elsewhere.

10. *my reputation*; the birds trusted to his protection.

11. *odd man*, who performs odd jobs about the house and grounds.

12. *oracle*, person of great wisdom.

13. *was for seeing*, had come with the purpose of seeing.

14. *the odds are quite heavy*, it is extremely likely.

15. *its will of the mice*, it may catch as many mice as it likes without interference.

16. *law of the survival of the fittest*, enunciated by the nineteenth-century scientist, Charles Darwin (1809-82), in his *Origin of Species*.

17. *Mauser bullet*, the German bullet.

18. *phalanx*, a body of troops or ducklings in close array.

19. *mobilization*, moving in order all together.

20. *Southey*, Robert (1774-1843), English romantic poet, contemporary with Coleridge and Wordsworth, and one of the *Lake Poets*. He is known as a poet chiefly by his short pieces, such as *Blenheim*, *The Inchcape Rock*, *My Days Among the Dead are Passed*, but he also wrote long works, *Thalaba the Destroyer*, *The Curse of Kehama*, *Roderick the Goth*. Possessed of a beautiful prose style, his *Life of Nelson* is an acknowledged masterpiece of historical biography.

21. *ballad of Bishop Hatto*, who was devoured by rats because of his cruelty:

“ They have whetted their teeth against the stones,
And now they pick the Bishop's bones;
They gnawed the flesh from every limb
For they were sent to do judgment on him!”

22. *Persians*, i.e. Persian cats, which are particularly handsome animals.

23. *Saturday and Sunday*. Sunday being the Sabbath day of rest, there was no shooting, and the rooks were safe.

24. *greenery*, the green plants they are nibbling.

25. *break for home*, make a sudden rush for their burrow.

26. *scut*, tail.

27. *go off sadly*, become more and more stupid.

28. *Stevenson*, see No. 11 at page 68. The poem is as follows:

THE WHOLE DUTY OF CHILDREN

A child should always say what's true
And speak when he is spoken to,
And behave mannerly at table
At least as far as he is able.

29. *fishwives*, the fisherwomen who with a great amount of talk and argument sell the fish which their husbands catch. Scott has given a picture of one in *The Antiquary*.

30. *aeronaut*, because he lives high amongst the branches, up in the air.

31. *Bobine Pellicule*, French for the spool or film roll used in film cameras. Bobine appeared to be an attractive feminine of Bob (although it is *bobbin* in English) while *Pellicule* (film) made a good surname.

32. *a burlesque Hamlet*. During the Play Scene (Act III, sc. ii.) Hamlet is represented as stretched first of all at Ophelia's feet, but latterly as crawling over the stage the better to observe the effect of his stratagem upon the King. He is also traditionally dressed in black velvet.

33. *rencontre*, chance meeting.

34. *Johnny Stout*, referring to the nursery rhyme:

“ Ding, dong, dell,
Pussy's in the well.
Who put her in?
Little Tommy Thin.
Who pulled her out?
Little Johnny Stout.”

35. *young night thoughts*, a humorous use of a familiar phrase. In 1742 the English poet Young produced his famous but now little-read *Night Thoughts*.

36. *question of precedence*, discussion about who should go first.

37. *with an irreproachable tailor*, i.e. their appearance was perfect, as a tailor turns out a perfectly dressed man.

38. *primrose*, one of the earliest of the flowers that bloom in the spring in England.

39. *Spectator*, one of the more serious weeklies of modern times.

40. *woodcut*, old type of illustration in books.

41. *black-letter*, the early style of printing.

42. *Brother Benignus*, type of the merciful and charitable man.

No. 16.—A Funeral

E. V. LUCAS

This sketch of the old scholar with “the heart of a child” is given with a genuine personal sympathy which is very attractive.

It was in a Surrey churchyard on a grey damp afternoon—all very solitary and quiet, with no alien¹ spectators and only a very few mourners; and no desolating sense of loss, although a very true and kindly friend was passing from us. A football match was in progress in a field adjoining the churchyard, and I wondered, as I stood by the grave, if, were I the schoolmaster,² I would stop the game just for a few minutes during which a body was committed to the earth; and I decided that I would not. In the midst of death³ we are in life; it is all as it should be in this bizarre, jostling world. And he whom we had come to bury would have been the first to wish the boys to go on with their sport.

He was an old scholar⁴—not so very old either—whom I had known for some five years, and had many a long talk with: a short and sturdy Irish gentleman, with a large, genial grey head stored with odd lore⁵ and the best literature; and the heart of a child. I never knew a man of so transparent a character. He showed you all

his thoughts: as someone once said, his brain was like a beehive under glass—you could watch its workings. And the honey in it! To walk with him at any season of the year was to be reminded or newly told of the best that the English poets have said on every phenomenon of wood and hedgerow, meadow and sky. He had the more lyrical passages of Shakespeare at his tongue's end, and all Wordsworth⁶ and Keats.⁷ These were his favourites: but he had read everything that has the true rapturous note,⁸ and had forgotten none of its spirit.

His life was divided between his books, his friends, and long walks. A solitary man, he worked without method, and probably courted his fatal illness in this way. To his own name⁹ there is not much to show; but such was his liberality that he was continually helping others, and the fruits of his erudition are widely scattered and have gone to increase many a comparative stranger's reputation. His own *magnum opus*¹⁰ he left unfinished; he had worked at it for years, until to his friends it had come to be something of a joke. But though still shapeless, it was a great feat,¹¹ as the world, I hope, will one day know. If, however, this treasure does not reach the world, it will not be because its worth was insufficient, but because no one can be found to decipher the manuscript; for I may say incidentally, that our old friend wrote the worst hand¹² in London, and it was not an uncommon experience of his correspondents to carry his missives from one pair of eyes to another, seeking a clue; and I remember on one occasion two such inquirers meeting unexpectedly, and each simultaneously drawing a letter from his pocket and uttering the request that the other should put

everything else on one side in order to solve the enigma.

Lack of method and a haphazard and unlimited generosity were not his only Irish qualities. He had a quick, chivalrous temper, too, and I remember the difficulty I once had in restraining him from leaping the counter of a small tobacconist in Great Portland Street,¹³ to give the man a good dressing¹⁴ for an imagined rudeness—not to himself, but to me. And there is more than one bus conductor in London who has cause to remember this sturdy quixotic¹⁵ passenger's championship of a poor woman to whom insufficient courtesy seemed to him to have been shown. Normally kind and tolerant, his indignation on hearing of injustice was red hot. He burned at a story of meanness. It would haunt him all the evening. "Can it really be true?" he would ask, and burst forth again into flame.

Abstemious himself in all things, save reading and writing and helping his friends and correspondents, he mixed excellent whisky punch,¹⁶ as he called it. He brought to this office¹⁷ all the concentration which he lacked in his literary labours. It was a ritual with him; nothing might be hurried or left undone, and the result, I might say, justified the means. His death reduces the number of such convivial alchemists¹⁸ to one only, and he is in Tasmania,¹⁹ and, so far as I am concerned, useless.

His avidity as a reader—his desire to master his subject—led to some charming eccentricities, as when, for a daily journey between Earl's Court²⁰ and Addison Road stations, he would carry a heavy handbag filled with books, "to read in the train". This was no satire²¹

on the railway system, but pure zeal. He had indeed no satire in him; he spoke his mind and it was over.

It was a curious little company that assembled to do honour to this old kindly bachelor—the two or three relatives that he possessed, and eight of his literary friends, most of them of a good age, and for the most part men of intellect, and in one or two cases of world-wide reputation, and all a little uncomfortable in unwonted formal black.²² We were very grave and thoughtful, but it was not exactly a sad funeral, for we knew that had he lived longer—he was sixty-three—he would certainly have been an invalid, which would have irked his active restless mind and body almost unbearably; and we knew also, that he had died in his first real illness after a very happy life. Since we knew this, and also that he was a bachelor and almost alone, those of us who were not his kin were not melted and unstrung by that poignant sense of untimely loss and irreparable removal that makes some funerals so tragic; but death, however it comes, is a mystery before which one cannot stand unmoved and unregretful; and I, for one, as I stood there, remembered how easy it would have been oftener to have ascended to his eyrie²³ and lured him out into Hertfordshire²⁴ or his beloved Epping,²⁵ or even have dragged him away to dinner and whisky punch; and I found myself meditating, too, as the profoundly impressive service²⁶ rolled on, how melancholy it was that all that storied brain,²⁷ with its thousands of exquisite phrases and its perhaps unrivalled knowledge of Shakespearean philology, should have ceased to be. For such a cessation, at any rate, say what one will of immortality, is part of the

sting of death, part of the victory of the grave, which St. Paul denied ²⁸ with such magnificent irony.

And then we filed out into the churchyard, which is a new and very large one, although the church is old, and at a snail's pace,²⁹ led by the clergyman, we crept along, a little black company, for I suppose nearly a quarter of a mile, under the cold grey sky. As I said, many of us were old, and most of us were indoor men, and I was amused to see how close to the head some of us held our hats—the merest barleycorn ³⁰ of interval being maintained for reverence' sake; whereas the sexton ³¹ and the clergyman had slipped on those black velvet skull-caps which God, in His infinite mercy, either completely overlooks,³² or seeing, smiles at. And there our old friend was committed to the earth, amid the contending shouts of the football players, and then we all clapped our hats on our heads with firmness (as he would have wished us to do long before), and returned to the town to drink tea in an ancient hostelry, and exchange memories, quaint, and humorous, and touching, and beautiful, of the dead.

NOTES

1. *alien*, not connected with the funeral ceremony.
2. *the schoolmaster*, whose boys were playing football.
3. *the midst of death*, the reverse of a phrase taken from the funeral service in the English Prayer Book.
4. *an old scholar*. W. J. Craig (1843-1906), editor of *The Oxford Shakespeare* and of *King Lear* in the *Arden Shakespeare*.
5. *odd lore*, out-of-the-way knowledge.
6. *Wordsworth* (1770-1850), the most famous of the Lake poets. Some of his shorter poems are immortal, and he wrote also longer poems such as *Michael*, *Tintern Abbey*, *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality*, *The Prelude* and *The Excursion*.
7. *Keats* (1795-1821), a famous poet of the Romantic Movement. Wrote *Endymion*, *Ode to a Nightingale*, *Ode to Autumn*, *The Eve of St. Agnes*, *La belle dame sans merci*, *Hyperion*, &c.

8. *the true rapturous note*, genuine lyrical inspiration. *Rapturous* means that the mood of inspiration has "seized" the poet.
9. *to his own name*; he had published little.
10. *magnum opus*, the "great work" of a man's life.
11. *a great feat*, full of varied wisdom and delight.
12. *the worst hand*, his handwriting was difficult to decipher.
13. *Great Portland Street*, in London.
14. *a good dressing*, to talk sternly to and probably chastise.
15. *quixotic*, filled with the lofty spirit of chivalry of Don Quixote, hero of the famous book by Cervantes, the Spanish writer who was contemporary with Shakespeare.
16. *punch*, made with whisky, hot water, lemons and sugar.
17. *this office*, the preparation of the punch.
18. *alchemists*, people who can concoct mixtures of marvellous power and delight.
19. *Tasmania*, an island off the south-east coast of Australia.
20. *Earl's Court, &c.*, a very short journey of about a mile by the London underground railway.
21. *no satire*, he did not imply that the journey was a very slow one, but that on railway journeys one must read.
22. *unwonted formal black*, dressed in suits of mourning. As a rule men who follow the profession of letters are rather bohemian in their dress, disdaining the formal fashions.
23. *eyrie*, his study, a retired upstairs room.
24. *Hertfordshire*, the county west of London.
25. *Epping*, where in ancient days there was a forest and a royal hunting ground of the English kings. It lies about 16 miles north-east of London, in the county of Essex, and its ten miles of woodland have been, since 1882, a public pleasure ground for the citizens of London: the gift of Queen Victoria to her people.
26. *impressive service*, the funeral service of the English Church.
27. *storied brain*, filled with knowledge, especially of literature.
28. *St. Paul denied*, in his letter to the Christian church at Corinth (1 Cor., xv. 51-55).
29. *at a snail's pace*, in keeping with the solemnity of the occasion.
30. *merest barleycorn*, a very small space.
31. *sexton*, the officer in charge of the churchyard and the graves.
32. *overlooks*. When custom decrees that you must take off your hat and bare your head, it is somehow permissible to wear a skull-cap.

No. 17.—On Popularity

ARTHUR CLUTTON-BROCK

Clutton-Brock (1868–1925) was educated at Oxford, and was for some years on the staff of the *Times*. His essays are calm and thought-provoking, and one feels that the essayist has raised the thought to a higher plane. He is partial to antithesis in his style.

There are two kinds of popularity which I will call intimate and long-distance popularity, and the first is far more real than the second. A man who is intimately popular is liked by those who know him; a man who is popular at long distance has, by some means, succeeded in propagating a favourable notion of himself among those who do not know him. The two kinds of popularity may go together, but often they are separate, and the man who enjoys long-distance popularity is disliked at close quarters.

Intimate popularity is always a proof of some virtue. If a man is liked by those who meet him, he may have many defects and even vices, but still he is liked for a cause, even though it be unknown to those who like him. His society gives pleasure, and it does so because he himself takes pleasure in the society of others, which means that he is disposed to like rather than to dislike them. It is to him a pleasure to meet those he has never met before;

he expects to find them good company, and therefore is good company himself. He is ready to take risks in social intercourse, and will not wait to discover whether you are a bore before he opens out to you.¹ He is, in fact, sanguine about human nature, and we like those who are sanguine, especially about ourselves, more than those who despond; they fill us with their own vitality and make us sharers in their own enjoyment.

You may say that this easy, instinctive liking is a slight virtue; but it *is* a virtue, for it makes you happy. It is better to like people for no particular reason than to dislike them without reason, better to make them happy than to make them miserable. The man who is intimately popular may be vain, but he is not an egotist—he is more interested in others than in himself; he enjoys, no doubt, the exercise of his social arts, but that is worth enjoying; he is a hedonist,² but one who also gives pleasure to others. Very likely he would not go much out of his way to do you a good turn, but he would rather do you a good than a bad one, and his friendship, if not deep, is large; indeed he might plead for himself that he has too many friends to be deeply involved with³ any of them. We are apt to be unjust to him if we find that he seems to promise more than he performs; but there is some egotism in our injustice. We have no right to expect that he will think of us when we are absent just because he is so sympathetic when we are present. By his sympathy he does give us something and for that we should be grateful. Clearly he cannot feel deeply for all those whose society he enjoys, and why should he feel deeply for us more than the rest? It is not fair to call him a humbug because

he forgets us, as soon as our back is turned, for someone else. His enjoyment of our society is quite genuine; he does not make up to us ⁴ with any ulterior design, for, if he did, we should not enjoy his society; we do enjoy it, and for that we ought to be grateful.

But the way to be intimately popular is, above all, not to judge. The saying, "Judge not, that ye be not judged",⁵ is commonly taken for a divine command, but it is also a statement of fact. Nothing makes us dislike a man so much as the knowledge that he is always judging us and all men, that his instinctive reaction is judgment. A man who has the habit of judging others may be respected, as we say, but he is also disliked; and while the respect is forced the dislike is hearty. If we can, we retaliate upon him by judging him with all the severity at our command. We seek eagerly for his weakness, and when we have found it insist upon it, as if it were a valuable scientific discovery, for it is indeed a discovery that liberates us from our unwilling admiration of him. When it comes to judging we feel two can play at that game. So it happens that a man who has the habit of judging, and who has overawed the world by his habit, as if he sat always in wig and robes in the seat of judgment, is suddenly and by universal consent dethroned. This has happened in literature to Carlyle.⁶ He was always judging everyone, and he overawed the world while alive. But now he is judged more severely than he deserves both as a writer and as a man, while Lamb⁷ of whom he spoke with bitter contempt is praised, more perhaps than he deserves, because he never seems to judge anyone, but rather enjoys the society of mankind. We are pleased to find that whereas Carlyle

judged man by a heroic standard, Lamb in his way was a hero. Perhaps it was because Aristides ⁸ had the habit of judging, that the unknown Athenian grew weary of hearing him called the Just. What we desire from each other is not justice—for who knows what that is?—but liking; and we give liking rather than justice to those who enjoy our society too well to judge us. We may criticize them, but our criticism is only skin deep; we do not wish to discover anything against them because we know they do not wish to discover anything against us. In their society we get a holiday from judgment altogether, and that is one reason why we enjoy it. They may not be Christians, but at least they do not feel or think or act on any perverse and anti-Christian principle. They may not have attained to Charity in the high Pauline ⁹ sense, but at least they have attained to good nature by instinct.

Many humble people are popular for these reasons; but if a man can keep this good nature, this freedom from judgment, this enjoyment of other people's society, when he has achieved eminence, then he is popular indeed. For, while most of us are instinctively and meanly on our guard against the advances of the humble, we are all flattered by the advances of the eminent; if they seem to have taken a fancy to us, we take a fancy to them. They win popularity easily, and that is a dangerous temptation to them. For a man may have a natural spontaneous virtue, and then become aware of it and exploit it. The successful are often afraid of envy, and have an uneasy sense that the world may suddenly combine to pull them down. There is to them something incalculable in the common opinion that gives them their reputation, and they fear

that it may suddenly veer like the wind. So they try to ensure themselves against such a change by being agreeable to everyone; they will make friends wherever they go, so that they may not be overcome by unknown enemies. And they do naturally enjoy the exercise of their social power, which is, of course, enormously increased by their eminence. But the mischief of this is not so much that they get a habit of insincerity, as that they waste their energy in making themselves agreeable and lose the power of saying no. A man in any walk of life, whether he be lawyer or artist or statesman or man of science, when he has achieved excellence can keep it only by hard work. If he spends half his time in making himself agreeable, he will be more concerned with his reputation than with his work, and his work will deteriorate; and so finally will his reputation. Further, if he gets the habit of exploiting his pleasant manners, they will become mechanical and cease even to be agreeable, and he will lose even the popularity for which he has made so many sacrifices. For to succeed one must be an artist even in social intercourse, one must really enjoy it; and the polite formulæ¹⁰ of the eminent are too obvious to give enjoyment.

Still, intimate popularity is worth having, if only for its own sake; but long-distance popularity is not worth having for its own sake; it is always a means to an end, like propaganda; it is, in fact, a kind of personal propaganda and no less dangerous than other kinds.

One may see the difference between the two kinds of popularity more clearly in the case of a writer. There are great writers who gain and who keep an intimate popularity, who are read and enjoyed, it may seem beyond their

merits, because in their works they express a natural liking for mankind, because they themselves enjoy rather than judge. Among these are Dickens ¹¹ and the elder Dumas ¹² and Shakespeare ¹³ himself. All of these would rather enjoy mankind than judge them. Even their dislikes are hearty and spontaneous; and the characters they dislike are those who themselves dislike others. There may be reactions against such writers; but through the fiercest reaction they are still read and enjoyed, for they make their readers happy. The elder Dumas, for instance, is at present little thought of in France, but he is still, I believe, read far more than Flaubert,¹⁴ who is always expressing judgments and dislikes, and is as full of unconscious malice as Dumas of unconscious enjoyment.

These writers win an intimate popularity because of a real virtue, and their sins which are often many are forgiven them, because they have loved much. The sins of Dickens are enormous, yet, as I read him, I find myself averting my eyes from them as Shem and Japheth ¹⁵ would not look at Noah drunk; and that is because I get so much delight from reading him, to read him makes me happy. I feel that he would like even me, whereas a writer like Flaubert seems to address himself to me, and all other readers, without contempt only because he has never met us; behind all his books there is an inexorable and malicious judgment passed by one who after all had no more right to be always judging than anyone else. But my liking of Dickens and such writers, even if too partial, does come of a real and close acquaintance. There are other writers who obtain a long-distance popularity, not because of any real merit, but because by some means or other they

contrive to spread an idea of themselves and their genius which is not true at all; and this is the secret of long-distance popularity, whether enjoyed by a politician, a writer, a priest, or any kind of public character. Always they have, sometimes consciously, usually unconsciously, spread a notion of themselves among a public too ignorant and busy to exercise any right judgment yet eager to find a hero. For mankind desires a hero to worship; it makes life more exciting to believe that somewhere there is a wonderful man actually living, one who knows all the secrets of the human heart, or can save society, or can voice all the inarticulate yearnings and ideals of the people, and if for a penny or so you can every week buy a newspaper in which this hero tells the world what ought to be done, then you get immense comfort from that newspaper, even if it contradicts itself once a fortnight, and for the most part says nothing intelligible. Once the notion is spread that it is written by a man who knows, that notion persists if he can go on talking nonsense with the air of one who knows, and of one who is impelled to speak out by an urgent love of truth and justice. For it is a curious fact about this long-distance popularity that, after it is once established, it is not destroyed by closer contact. If a preacher or speaker gets a name for eloquence and inspiration, he too may talk nonsense for ever, provided he does it with an air of conviction. The crowds, who assemble to listen to him, bring with them their idea of him which even he cannot destroy. His very vagueness helps him, for they can read into it what they will, and all go away believing that he said what they expected him to say. There are at the present time several of such heroes,

all of whom won the war;¹⁶ though what they did to win it neither they nor anyone else can tell. It may be, indeed, that if they had been allowed to wage the war in their own way, they would have ended it soon without defeat; but it is more probable that they had no way of their own ever present to their minds; their business was to shout directions through a megaphone, but directions happily so vague that no one could obey them even if he would. Not one of these was put to the test like their forerunner, Cleon,¹⁷ whom the Athenians suddenly made a commander-in-chief, and who was luckily killed in battle before he could do much harm.

There is a kind of clown called a Marcelline who makes you laugh by pretending to share the work others are doing. When they are rolling up a carpet, he walks behind and imitates their movements in a bland and encouraging manner. Long-distance popularity is achieved in politics and journalism by the same means, except that in these cases the Marcelline is not laughed at but actually deceives others and himself. They, and he, think he is winning the war, and what not, by his bland and encouraging, or fierce and obstructive notions; and when the thing is done, he turns round and bows and gets the applause, while those who have really done it are mopping their brows behind the scenes. But it would be an error to think that this kind of Marcelline is without talent. He needs great energy, but it is spent not in doing anything worth doing, but in spreading a heroic idea of himself. He is in fact like a tradesman who uses great business ability in puffing a worthless patent medicine. What you pay for is the advertisement, and a country which gives

power to Marcellines will certainly pay for their advertisements and pay very heavily.

In fact one of the chief problems of any large community like our own is to free itself from the spell of long-distance popularity, to find some means of discouraging the arts by which it is won. For it is certain that a man who achieves long-distance popularity will not have much time or energy for doing anything else. In that also he is like the tradesman who spends all his money on advertisements, and has none over to spend upon a good article. And the temptation to any unscrupulous man of talent and energy to aim at long-distance popularity is now enormous, if that popularity seems to him worth having. The newspapers are instruments ready to his hand; they seldom even try to have any judgment; if once a man can get himself talked about they will continue to talk about him; he becomes news as if he were the co-respondent in an everlasting divorce case. Millions of people hear of him who never hear of those who do the real work of the world, and just because he is heard of, he has power. What he says is reported, what he writes is read. If he stands for Parliament, people vote for him; and all the while he is incapable of any excellence, because all his energy goes in self-propaganda. It is so even with many popular writers. They would never write so badly if it were not that most of their energy goes in advertisement; but since they are well advertised, the public finds in their books virtues that are not there; just as it finds in patent medicines healing properties that are not there. So we are misled every way, because we are a community too large to know our public men except by report, and

because we have got the habit of judging even books, not by what we find in them, but by the common report of them.

The only remedy seems to be in a psychology that does not yet exist. We must learn the symptoms of self-propaganda, and the symptoms with which it affects us. The man who aims at long-distance popularity behaves in a certain way, of which some of us are already dimly aware; but at present neither the public, nor he himself, know that he is a criminal of a very dangerous kind. What is needed is a science of the mind, much more precise than any which yet exists, to put us on our guard against him; for until we are on our guard we shall remain at the mercy of every kind of imposture, which is the more dangerous because it is usually half unconscious.

NOTES

1. *opens out to you*, speaks frankly and without reserve.
2. *hedonist*, one who regards pleasure as the chief good.
3. *deeply involved with*, take a very particular interest in.
4. *make up to us*, seek our acquaintance.
5. "*Judge not . . .*", a quotation from *St. Matthew*, chap. vii, verse 1.
6. *Carlyle*, see note to No. 13, at page 113.
7. *Lamb*, see note to No. 9, at page 51.
8. *Aristides*, a celebrated Athenian of the fifth century B.C., whose great temperance and virtue procured him the surname of *Just*. When he was sentenced to banishment for ten years in the year 484 B.C., one peasant asserted that he voted for his banishment because he was tired of hearing him called the *Just*.
9. *Pauline*, referring to the words of St. Paul on Charity, in the thirteenth chapter of *1 Corinthians*.
10. *polite formulæ*, conventional phrases.
11. *Dickens* (1812-70), eminent nineteenth-century novelist, author of *Oliver Twist*, *The Pickwick Papers*, *David Copperfield*, &c. His large humanity continues to attract readers, and many who find fault with his work read it oftenest.

12. *Dumas* (1803-70), great French novelist, author of *The Three Musketeers*, and other famous historical novels.

13. *Shakespeare* (1564-1616), our greatest dramatist. He never takes sides against his characters.

14. *Flaubert*, Gustave (1821-80), author of *Madame Bovary*, *Salammbô*, &c., who led the nineteenth-century novel in France forward from romanticism, and made realism possible. His judgments are very severe. Cf. No. 12 note, page 96.

15. *Shem and Japheth*, cf. *Genesis*, chap. ix, verse 23: "And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness."

16. *won the war*, the essay was written just after the Great War.

17. *Cleon*, an Athenian tanner of the fifth century B.C., who by intrigue and plausible eloquence became a general of the armies of the state. He was killed at Amphipolis, in a battle against the Spartans.

No. 18.—The Hum of Insects

ROBERT LYND

Mr. Lynd, who is the literary editor of the *Daily News*, was born in 1879. In 1908 appeared sketches of Irish life, called *Portraits and Impressions*; the *Book of This and That* was published in 1915; the *Pleasures of Ignorance* in 1922; while *Idling* came in 1926. He is an essay writer of great charm and fancy.

It makes all the difference whether you hear an insect in the bedroom or in the garden. In the garden the voice of the insect soothes; in the bedroom it irritates. In the garden it is the hum of spring; in the bedroom it seems to belong to the same school of music as the bizz¹ of the dentist's drill or the sawmill. It may be that it is not the right sort of insect that invades the bedroom. Even in the garden we wave away a mosquito. Either its note is in itself offensive or we dislike it as the voice of an unscrupulous enemy. By an unscrupulous enemy I mean an enemy that attacks without waiting to be attacked. The mosquito is a beast of prey; it is out for blood,² whether one is as gentle as Tom Pinch³ or uses violence. The bee and the wasp are in comparison noble creatures. They will, so it is said, never injure a human being unless a human being has injured them. The worst of it is, they do not discriminate between one human being and another, and the bee that floats over the wall into our

garden may turn out to have been exasperated by the behaviour of a retired policeman ⁴ five miles away who struck at it with a spade and roused in it a blind passion for reprisals. That or something like it is, probably, the explanation of the stings perfectly innocent persons receive from an insect that is said never to touch you if you leave it alone. As a matter of fact, when a bee loses its head,⁵ it does not even wait for a human being in order to relieve its feelings. I have seen a dog racing round a field in terror as a result of a sting from an angry bee. I have seen a turkey racing round a farmyard in terror as a result of the same thing. All the trouble arose from a human being's having very properly removed a large quantity of honey from a row of hives. I do not admit that the bee would have been justified in stinging even the human being—who, after all, is master on this partially civilized planet. It had certainly no right to sting the dog or the turkey, which had as little to do with stealing the honey as the Vice-Chancellor of Oxford University. Yet in spite of such things, and of the fact that some breeds of bees are notorious for their crossness, especially when there is thunder in the air, the bee is morally far higher in the scale than the mosquito. Not only does it give you honey instead of malaria, and help your apples and strawberries to multiply,⁶ but it aims at living a quiet, inoffensive life, at peace with everybody, except when it is annoyed. The mosquito does what it does in cold blood, that is why it is so unwelcome a bedroom visitor.

But even a bee or a wasp, I fancy, would seem tedious company at two in the morning, especially if it came and

buzzed near the pillow. It is not so much that you would be frightened: if the wasp alighted on your cheek, you could always lie still and hold your breath till it had finished trying to sting—that is an infallible preventive. But there is a limit to the amount of your night's rest that you are willing to sacrifice in this way. You cannot hold your breath while you are asleep, and yet you dare not cease holding your breath while a wasp is walking over your face. Besides, it might crawl into your ear, and what would you do then? Luckily, the question does not often arise in practice owing to the fact that the wasp and the bee are more like human beings than mosquitoes and have more or less the same habits of nocturnal rest. As we sit in the garden, however, the mind is bound to speculate, and to revolve such questions as whether this hum of insects that delights us is in itself delightful, whether its delightfulness depends on its surroundings, or whether it depends on its associations with past springs.

Certainly in a garden the noise of insects seems as essentially beautiful a thing as the noise of birds or the noise of the sea. Even those have been criticised, especially by persons who suffer from sleeplessness, but their beauty is affirmed⁷ by the general voice of mankind. These three noises appear to have an infinite capacity for giving us pleasure—a capacity, probably, beyond that of any music of instruments. It may be that on hearing them we become a part of some universal music,⁸ and that the rhythm of wave, bird or insect echoes in some way the rhythm of our own breath and blood. Man is in love with life, and these are the millionfold chorus of life⁹—

the magnified echo of his own pleasure in being alive. At the same time our pleasure in the hum of insects is also, I think, a pleasure of reminiscence. It reminds us of other springs and summers in other gardens. It reminds us of the infinite peace of childhood when on a fine day the world hardly existed ¹⁰ beyond the garden-gate. We can smell moss-roses—how we loved them as children—as a bee swings by. Insect after insect dances through the air, each dying away like a note of music, and we see again the border of pinks ¹¹ and the strawberries, and the garden paths edged with box, ¹² and the old dilapidated wooden seat under the tree, and an apple-tree and all those things that made us infinitely happy as children when we were in the country ¹³—happier than we ever were made by toys, for we do not remember any toys so intensely as we remember the garden and the farm. We had the illusion in those days that it was going to last for ever. There was no past or future. There was nothing real except the present in which we lived—a present in which all the human beings were kind, in which a dim-sighted grandfather sang songs (especially a song in which the chorus began “Free and easy”), in which aunts brought us animal biscuits ¹⁴ out of town, in which there was neither man-servant nor maid-servant, ¹⁵ neither ox nor ass, that did not seem to go about with a bright face. It was a present that overflowed with kindness, though everybody except the ox and the ass believed that it was only by the skin of our teeth that any of us would escape being burnt alive ¹⁶ for eternity. Perhaps we thought little enough about it except on Sundays or at prayers. Certainly no one was gloomy about it before children.

William John McNabb, the huge labourer who looked after the horses, greeted us all as cheerfully as if we had been saved and ready for Paradise.

It would be unfair to human beings, however, to suggest that they are less lavish with their smiles than they were thirty years or so ago. Everybody—or almost everybody—still smiles. We can hardly stop to talk to a man in the street without a duet of smiles. The Prince of Wales smiles across the world from left to right, and the Crown Prince of Japan smiles across the world from right to left. We cannot open an illustrated paper without seeing smiling statesmen, cricketers, jockeys, oarsmen, bridegrooms, clergymen, actresses, and undergraduates. Yet somehow we are no longer made happy by a smile. We no longer take it, as we used to take it, as evidence that the person smiling is either happy or kind. It then seemed to come from the heart. It now seems a formula.¹⁷ It is, we may admit, a pleasant and useful formula. But a man might easily be a burglar or a murderer or a Cabinet Minister and smile. Some people are supposed to smile merely in order to show what good teeth they have. William John McNabb, I am sure, never did that.

We need not grumble at our contemporaries, however, for not being so fine as William John McNabb. To children, for all we know, the world may still seem to be full of people who laugh because they are happy and smile because they are kind. The world will always remain to a child the chief of toys, and the hum of insects as enchanting as the hum of a musical top.¹⁸ Even those of us who are grown up can recover this enchantment, not only through the pleasures of memory, but through the

endless pleasures of watching the things that inhabit the earth. The world is always waiting to be discovered in full, and yet no life is long enough to discover the whole of a single county, or even the whole of a single parish. Who alive, for instance, knows all the moles of Sussex? I confess I got my first sight of one a few days ago, and though I had seen dead moles hanging from trees and had read descriptions of moles, the living creature was as unexpected as if one had come on it, silent upon a peak in Darien.¹⁹ I had never expected it to look so black and glossy in the midday sun or to have that little pink snout that made me think of it as a small underground pig. I had always been told, too, that the sound of a footstep would frighten a mole, but this mole only began to show fright at the sound of voices. Then it began to tear its way into the undergrowth with paws and snout ever trying to overtake each other. Mr. Blunden²⁰ described how

The lost mole tries to pierce the matted clay
In agony and terror of the sun.

I got much the same impression of agony and terror as this poor creature dug its way into the grass and ferns, and, coming out at the far end of the clump, bolted under a tree like a frightened pig. And yet, they say, this poor little coward is a fierce animal, enough. He is, we are told, impelled by so cruel a hunger that he would die of it were it to go unsatisfied for even twenty-four hours. If he can find nothing else to eat, he will kill and eat a fellow-mole. So the authorities tell us, but I wonder how many of the authorities have ever seen a

mole in the very act of cannibalism. How many of them have followed him on his long journeys through the bowels of the earth? He certainly looked no South Sea monster²¹ on the Sunday morning on which for a few seconds I watched him. Nor would John Clare²² have written affectionately about him had he been entirely bloody-minded.

Then there was the hedgehog. The charm of hedgehogs is that we do not see them every day—that their appearance is a secret and an accident. They are a part of the busy life that goes on all about us as mysteriously as the movements of spirits. Consequently, when I was looking over a sloping field the other evening and, hearing a crackling as of sticks being trodden on, turned my eyes and saw a living creature making its way out of a wood into the grass, I was delighted to find that it was a hedgehog and not a man or a rat. I could see it only dimly in the twilight, and it was difficult to believe that so small an animal had made so great a noise. The pleasure of recognition, unfortunately, was not mutual. No sooner did the hedgehog hear a foot pressing on the road than it gave up all thoughts of its supper of insects and hobbled back into the thicket. I regretted only that I had not made a greater noise and scared it into rolling itself into a ball, as everybody says it does when alarmed. But it is perhaps just as well that the hedgehog did not merely repeat itself in this way. We like a certain variety of behaviour in animals, some element of the unexpected that always keeps our curiosity alive and looking forward.

But we must not exaggerate the pleasure to be got from moles and hedgehogs. They make a part of our being

happy, but they do not delight the whole of our being, as a child is delighted by the world every spring. It is probably the child in us that responds most wholeheartedly to such pleasures. They, like the hum of insects, help to restore the illusion of a world that is perfectly happy because it is such a Noah's Ark of a spectacle and everybody is kind. But, even as we submit to the illusion in the garden, we become restive in our deck-chairs and remember the telephone or the daily paper or a letter that has to be written. And reality weighs on us, like a hand laid on a top, making an end of the spinning, making an end of the music. The world is no longer a toy dancing round and round. It is a problem, a run-down machine, a stuffy room, full of little stabbing creatures that make irritating noise.

NOTES

1. *bizz*, a buzzing sound; an example of an onomatopoeic word.
2. *out for blood*; here the literal use of a phrase which is always employed nowadays in its figurative sense adds to the effect, and is part of the quiet charm of the author's style.
3. *Tom Pinch*, a gentle soul of Charles Dickens' creation, the victim of Pecksniff in *Martin Chuzzlewit*.
4. *retired policeman*, who spends his now abundant leisure digging in his garden.
5. *loses its head*, becomes furiously angry.
6. *to multiply*, by carrying pollen from flower to flower.
7. *their beauty is affirmed*. Shakespeare refers to the beauty of the birds' song in

" Under the greenwood tree
Who loves to lie with me,
And turn his merry note
Unto the sweet bird's throat."

The poet Gray writes of

" The untaught harmony of Spring."

For Stevenson the fitting gift of a lover is " bird-song at morning ". Browning celebrates the careless rapture of the thrush. Again, Milton

speaks in *Lycidas* of "the shores and sounding seas", while Wordsworth recognizes two great Voices in Nature, "one is of the Sea".

8. *universal music*. Here the author indulges in a rather fascinating flight of fancy.

9. *chorus of life*. Another flight of fancy.

10. *the world hardly existed*, i.e. the outside world; ince there was perfect and complete happiness within the garden.

11. *pinks*, garden flowers.

12. *box*, a dwarf shrub with dark-green leaves, which is a favourite border for garden paths.

13. *in the country*. The children spent the summer at the country home of their parents.

14. *animal biscuits*, sweet biscuits baked in the shapes of animals.

15. *man-servant nor maid-servant*; a reference to the tenth commandment "Thou shalt not covet", &c. See *Exodus*, chap. xx.

16. *burnt alive*. The severely religious Calvinists thought the children wicked, and prophesied their future punishment by the Devil.

17. *formula*, without any personal or intimate significance.

18. *musical top*, a toy with a spinning motion which makes music as it spins.

19. *Darien*. The author is quoting the well-known last line of Keats' sonnet *On Chapman's Homer*.

20. *Mr. Blunden*, was born in 1896 and after serving in the War was Professor of English at Tokio for some years. He has published a good deal of verse, including *The Waggoner*, *The Shepherd*, *The Bold Adventure*, *To Nature*, *Masks of Time*, &c., and also *The Madrigals and Chronicles of John Clare*, and an edition of John Clare's poems.

21. *South Sea monster*, a cannibal.

22. *John Clare*, born 1793, died 1864, the Northamptonshire Peasant Poet, who composed poems of rural life, including the *Rural Muse*, written in 1835. His poems were edited by Mr. Blunden in 1920.

No. 19.—On Good Resolutions

ROBERT LYND

There is too little respect paid to the good resolutions which are so popular a feature of the New Year. We laugh at the man who is always turning over a new leaf as though he were the last word in absurdity, and we even invent proverbs to discourage him, such as that "the road to Hell is paved with good intentions". This makes life extremely difficult for the well meaning. It robs many of us of the very last of our little store of virtue. Our virtue we have hitherto put almost entirely into our resolutions. To ask us to put it into our actions instead is like asking a man who has for years devoted his genius to literature to switch it off on to marine biology. Nature, unfortunately, has not made us sufficiently accommodating¹ for these rapid changes. She has appointed to each of us his own small plot; has made one of us a poet, another an economist, another a politician—one of us good at making plans, another good at putting them into execution. One feels justified, then, in claiming for the maker of good resolutions a place in the sun.² Good resolutions are too delightful a form of morality to be allowed to disappear from a world in which so much of morality is dismal. They are morality

at its dawn—morality flesh and untarnished and full of song. They are golden anticipations of the day's work—anticipations of which, alas, the day's work too often proves unworthy. Work, says Amiel³ somewhere, is vulgarized thought. Work, I prefer to say, is vulgarized good resolutions. There are no doubt, some people whose resolutions are so natively mediocre that it is no trouble in the world to put them into practice. Promise and performance are in such cases as like as a pair of twins, both are contemptible. But as for those of us whose promises are apt to be Himalayan, how can we expect the little pack-mule of performance to climb to such pathless and giddy heights? Are not the Himalayas in themselves a sufficiently inspiring spectacle—all the more inspiring, indeed, if some peak still remains unscaled, mysterious?

But resolutions of this magnitude belong rather to the region of day-dreams. They take one back to one's childhood when one longed to win the football cup for one's school team and, if possible, to have one's leg broken just as one scored the decisive try.⁴ Considering that one did not play football, this may surely be regarded as a noble example of an impossible ideal. It has the inaccessibility of a star rather than of a mountain peak. As one grows older, one's resolutions become earthier. They are concerned with such things as giving up tobacco, taking exercise, answering letters, chewing one's food properly, going to bed before midnight, getting up before noon. This may seem a mean list enough, but there is wonderful comfort to be got out of even a modest good resolution so long as it refers, not to the next five minutes,

but to to-morrow, or next week| or next month, or next year, or the year after. How vivid, how beautiful, to-morrow seems with our lordly regiment of good resolutions ready to descend upon it as upon a city seen afar off for the first time. Every day lies before us as wonderful as London lay before Blücher⁵ on the night when he exclaimed: "My God, what a city to loot." Our life is gorgeous with to-morrows. It is all to-morrows. Good resolutions might be described, in the words in which a Cabinet Minister once described journalism, as the intelligent anticipation of events. They are, however, the intelligent anticipation of events which do not take place. They are the April of virtue with no September following.

On the other hand, there is much to be said for putting a good resolution into effect now and then. There is a brief introductory period in most human conduct, before the novelty has worn off, when doing things is almost, if not quite, as pleasant as thinking about them. Thus, if you make a resolve to get up at seven o'clock every day during the year you should do it on at least one morning. If you do, you will feel so surprised with the world, and content with your own part in it, that you will decide to get up at seven every morning for the rest of your life. But do not be rash. Getting up early, if you do it seldom enough, is an intoxicating experience. But before long the intoxication fades, and only the habit is left. It was not the elder brother with his habits, but the prodigal with his occasional recurrence into virtue, for whom the fatted calf was killed. Even for the prodigal,⁶ when once he had settled down to orderly habits, the supply of fatted calves

from his father's farm ~~was~~ bound before long to come to an end.

There are, however, other good resolutions in which it is not so easy to experiment for a single morning. If you resolved to learn German, for instance, there would be very little intoxication to be got out of a single sitting face to face with a German grammar. Similarly, the inventors of systems of exercise for keeping the townsman in condition all remind us that, in order to attain health we must go on toiling morning after morning at their wretched punchings and twistings and kickings till the end of time. This is an unfair advantage to take of the ordinary maker of good resolutions. He is enticed into the adventure of trying a new thing only to discover that he cannot be said to have tried it until he has tried it on a thousand occasions. Most of us, it may be said at once, are not to be enticed into such matters higher than our knees. We may go so far as to buy the latest book on health or the latest mechanical apparatus to hang on the wall. But soon they become little more than decorations for our rooms. The pair of immense dumb-bells that we got in our boyhood, when we believed that the heavier the dumb-bell the more magnificently would our biceps swell—who would think of taking them from their dusty corner now? Then there was that pair of wooden dumb-bells light as wind, which we tried for a while on hearing that heavy dumb-bells were a snare and only hardened the muscles without strengthening them. They lie now where the woodlouse may eat them if it has so lowly an appetite. But our good resolutions did really array themselves in colours when the first of the exercisers was invented.

There was a thrill in those first mornings when we rose a little earlier than usual and expected to find an inch added to our chest measurement before breakfast. That is always the characteristic of good resolutions. They are founded on a belief in the possibility of performing miracles. If we could swell visibly as a result of a single half hour's tug at weights and wires,⁷ we would all desert our morning's sleep for our exerciser with a will. But the faith that believes in miracles is an easy sort of faith. The faith that goes on believing in the final excellence, though one day shows no obvious advance on another, is the more enviable genius. It is perhaps the rarest thing in the world, and all the good resolutions ever made, if placed end to end, would not make so much as an inch of it. One man I knew who had faith of this kind. He used to practise strengthening his will every evening by buying almonds and raisins or some sort of sweet thing, and sitting down before them by the hour without touching them. And frequently, so he told me, he would repeat over to himself a passage which Poe⁸ quotes at the top of one of his stories—*The Fall of the House of Usher*, was it not?—beginning "Great are the mysteries of the will". I envied him his philosophic grimness: I should never have been able to resist the almonds and raisins. But that incantation from Poe—was not that, too, but a desperate clutching after the miraculous?

There is nothing which men desire more fervently than this mighty will. It may be the most selfish or unselfish of desires. We may long for it for its own sake or for the sake of some purpose which means more to us than praise. We are eager to escape from that continuous humiliation

of the promises we have made to ourselves and broken. It is all very well to talk about being baffled to fight better, but that implies a will on the heroic scale. Most of us, as we see our resolutions fly out into the sun, only to fall with broken wings before they have more than begun their journey, are inclined at times to relapse into despair. On the other hand, Nature is prodigal, and in nothing so much as good resolutions. In spite of the experience of half a lifetime of failure, we can still draw upon her for these with the excitement of faith in our hearts. Perhaps there is some instinct for perfection in us which thus makes us deny our past and stride off into the future forgetful of our chains. It is the first step that counts, says the proverb. Alas! We know that that is the step that nearly everybody can take. It is when we are about to take the steps that follow that our ankle feels the drag of old habit. For even those of us who are richest in good resolutions are the creatures of habit just as the baldly virtuous are. The only difference is that we are the slaves of old habits while they are the masters of new ones. . . . On the whole, then, we cannot do better as the New Year approaches than resolve to go out once more in quest of the white flower which has already been allowed to fade too long, where Tennyson⁹ placed it, in the late Prince Consort's buttonhole.

1. *accommodating*, able to change readily.

2. *a place in the sun*, a position of assured importance. The phrase has become notorious since its use by the ex-Kaiser to define Germany's ambition.

3. *Amiel*, a Swiss philosopher and critic; born 1821, died 1881. Was Professor of Philosophy at Geneva University, and author of the *Journal Intime*.

4. *decisive try*, a score in Rugby football is called a try.

5. *Blücher*, the German general who helped Wellington to defeat Napoleon Bonaparte at Waterloo in 1815.

6. *the prodigal*, referring to Jesus Christ's parable of the Prodigal Son. See *St. Luke*, chap. xv.

7. *tug at weights and wires*, which belong to the "systems of exercise for keeping the townsman in condition".

8. *Poe*. Edgar Allan Poe (1809-49), American writer. His best-known poem is *The Raven*, written in 1845; while his prose works include the famous *Tales of Mystery and Imagination*. He was a conscious literary artist; his verse is tinged with melancholy; his stories are filled with horror, fear and mystery. The passage referred to is from Joseph Glanvill, and is quoted at the beginning of *Ligeia*, not *The Fall of the House of Usher*.

9. *Tennyson placed it*, referring to Tennyson's dedication of his *Idylls of the King*, which was addressed to the Prince Consort, husband of Queen Victoria, and contained these lines:

" but through all this tract of years
Wearing the white flower of a blameless life,
Before a thousand peering littlenesses,
In that fierce light which beats upon a throne."

No. 20.—In Praise of Walking

ALPHA OF THE PLOUGH

Alfred George Gardiner, journalist and writer, was born in 1865. His chief works are, *Prophets, Priests and Kings, Pillars of Society, The War Lords, Life of Sir William Harcourt, Life of George Cadbury, &c.*; besides collections of essays, such as *Pebbles on the Shore* and *Leaves in the Wind*, written under the pen-name of "Alpha of the Plough". He chose the name when asked by the editor of the *Star* to contribute weekly essays to that paper. "There at the head of the Plough," he writes, "flames the great star that points to the pole. I will hitch my little wagon to that sublime image. I will be Alpha of the Plough."

The spontaneous enjoyment felt amidst the wilder beauties of Nature in the lovely Lake district of England, associated so closely with the English poets of nature, adds to the charm we derive from the writer's strong personal touch. We are reminded of Hazlitt's *On Going a Journey* and of Stevenson's *Walking Tours*.

I started out the other day from Keswick ¹ with a rucksack ² on my back, a Baddeley ³ in my pocket, and a companion ⁴ by my side. I like a companion when I go a-walking. "Give me a companion by the way," said Sterne,⁵ "if it be only to remark how the shadows lengthen as the sun declines." That is about enough. You do not want a talkative person. Walking is an occupation in itself. You may give yourself up to chatter at the beginning,

but when you are warmed to the job you are disposed to silence, drop perhaps one behind the other, and reserve your talk for the inn table and the after-supper pipe. An occasional joke, an occasional stave of song, a necessary consultation over the map—that is enough for the way.

At the head of the lake ⁶ we got in a boat and rowed across Derwentwater to the tiny bay at the foot of Catbells. There we landed, shouldered our burdens,⁷ and set out over the mountains and the passes and for a week we enjoyed the richest solitude this country can offer. We followed no cut-and-dried programme. I love to draw up programmes for a walking tour, but I love still better to break them. For one of the joys of walking is the sense of freedom it gives you. You are tied to no time-table, the slave of no road, the tributary ⁸ of no man. If you like the road you follow it; if you choose the pass that is yours also; if your fancy (and your wind ⁹) is for the mountain tops, then over Great Gable and Scawfell, Robinson and Helvellyn be your way. Every short cut is for you, and every track is the path of adventure. The stream that tumbles down the mountain side is your wine cup. You kneel on the boulders, bend your head, and take such draughts as only the healthy thirst of the mountains can give. And then on your way again singing:

Bed in the bush with stars to see,
Bread I dip in the river,
There's the life for a man like me,
There's the life for ever.¹⁰

What liberty is there like this? You have cut your moorings¹¹ from the world, you are far from telegraphs and newspapers and all the frenzies of the life you have left behind

you, you are alone with the lonely hills and the wide sky, and the elemental things that have been from the beginning and will outlast all the tortured drama ¹² of men. The very sounds of life—the whistle of the curlew,¹³ the bleating of the mountain sheep, add to the sense of primeval solitude. To these sounds the crags have echoed for a thousand and ten thousand years; to these sounds and to the rushing of the winds and the waters they will echo ten thousand years hence. It is as though you have passed out of time into eternity, where a thousand years are as one day. There is no calendar for this dateless world. The buzzard ¹⁴ that you have startled from its pool in the gully and that circles round with wide-flapping wings has a lineage as ancient as the hills, and the vision of the pikes ¹⁵ of Langdale that bursts on you as you reach the summit of Eskhause ¹⁶ is the same vision that burst on the first savage who adventured into these fastnesses of the mountains.

And then as the sun begins to slope to the west you remember that, if you are among immortal things, you are only a mortal yourself, that you are getting footsore, and that you need a night's lodging and the comforts of an inn. Whither shall we turn? The valleys call us on every side. Newlands' wide vale we can reach or cheerful Borrowdale, or lonely Ennerdale, or—yes, to-night we will sup at Wastdale, at the jolly old inn that Auld Will Ritson used to keep, that inn sacred to the cragsman,¹⁷ where on New Year's Eve the gay company of climbers foregather from their brave deeds on the mountains and talk of hand-holds ¹⁸ and foot-holds and sing the song of "The rope, the rope", and join in the chorus as the landlord trolls out:

I'm not a climber, not a climber,
Not a climber now,
My weight is going fourteen stone—
I'm not a climber now.

We shall not find Gaspard there to-night—Gaspard, the gay and intrepid guide from the Dauphiné,¹⁹ beloved of all who know the lonely inn at Wastdale. He is away on the battlefield fighting a sterner foe²⁰ than the rocks and precipices of Great Gable and Scawfell. But old Joe the shepherd will be there—old Joe, who has never been in a train or seen a town and whose special glory is that he can pull²¹ uglier faces than any man in Cumberland. He will not pull them for anybody, only when he is in a good humour and for his cronies in the back parlour. To-night, perchance, we shall see his eyes roll as he roars “D’ye ken John Peel?”. Yes, Wastdale shall be to-night’s halt. And so over Black Sail, and down the rough mountain side to the inn whose white-washed walls hail us from afar out of the gathering shadows of the valley.

To-morrow? Well, to-morrow shall be as to-day. We will shoulder our rucksacks early, and be early on the mountains, for the first maxim in going a journey is the early start. Have the whip-hand²² of the day, and then you may loiter as you choose. If it is hot, you may bathe in the chill waters of those tarns that lie bare to the eye of heaven in the hollows of the hills—tarns²³ with names of beauty and waters of such crystal purity as Killarney²⁴ knows not. And at night we will come through the clouds down the wild course of Rosset Ghyll and sup and sleep in the hotel hard by Dungeon Ghyll, or, perchance, having the day well in hand, we will push on by Blea

Tarn and Yewdale to Conistone, or by Easedale Tarn to Grasmere, and so to the Swan at the foot of Dunmail Raise. For we must call at the Swan. Was it not the Swan that Wordsworth's²⁵ "Waggoner" so triumphantly passed? Was it not the Swan to which Sir Walter Scott²⁶ used to go for beer when he was staying with Wordsworth at Rydal Water? And behind the Swan is there not that fold in the hills where Wordsworth's "Michael"²⁷ built, or tried to build, his sheepfold? Yes, we will stay at the Swan whatever befalls.

And so the jolly days go by, some wet, some fine, some a mixture of both, but all delightful, and we forget the day of the week, know no news except the changes in the weather and the tract over the mountains, meet none of our kind except a rare vagabond²⁸ like ourselves—with rope across his shoulder if he is a rock-man, with rucksack on back if he is tourist—and with no goal save some far-off valley inn where we shall renew our strength and where the morrow's uprising to deeds shall be sweet.

I started to write in praise of walking, and I find I have written in praise of Lakeland. But indeed the two chants of praise are a single harmony, for I have written in vain if I have not shown that the way to see the most exquisite cabinet²⁹ of beauties in this land is by the humble path of the pedestrian. He who rides through Lakeland knows nothing of its secrets, has tasted of none of its magic.

NOTES

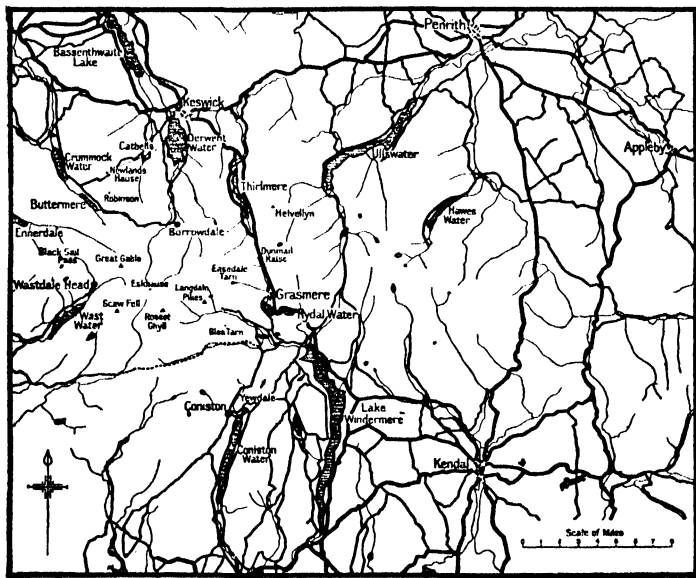
1. *Keswick*, on Lake Derwentwater.
2. *rucksack*, a knapsack.
3. *Baddeley*, guide to the district.
4. *a companion*, but contrast Hazlitt's "I like to go by myself," and Stevenson's "a walking tour should be gone upon alone".

5. *Sterne* (1713-68), author of the eccentric novel *Tristram Shandy* and *A Sentimental Journey* Has some charm of style. Cf. No. 11, note, p. 80.

6. *the lake*, Derwentwater.

7. *our burdens*, their rucksacks.

8. *tributary*, servant, vassal, slave.



9. *your wind*, i.e. if you are not short of breath and unable to climb to the tops of mountains.

10. *Bed in the bush*, from R. L. Stevenson's poem *The Vagabond*.

11. *cut your moorings from*, are completely separated from.

12. *tortured drama*, the social difficulties and anxieties of civilization.

13. *curlew*, a bird of the plover variety, found only in the wilder and remoter districts.

14. *buzzard*, a large wild bird, almost extinct in England.

15. *pikes*, peaks.

16. *hause*, hillock.

17. *cragman*, the man whose hobby it is to climb difficult cliffs and mountains.

18. *hand-holds*, &c., terms used in mountaineering.

19. *Dauphiné*, a district in south-east France, between the River Rhone and the mountains bordering on Italy. It is very mountainous.

20. *a sterner foe*, as the essay was written during the Great War, and Gaspard would be recalled to fight for France.

21. *pull*, i.e. make.

22. *the whip-hand*, i.e. start early so that you may have the whole day at your disposal.

23. *tarns*, small mountain lakes.

24. *Killarney*, the far-famed lake-district in Ireland, where there are three lakes of great beauty.

25. *Wordsworth* (1770-1850), one of the Lake School poets, also one of England's greatest poets. Wrote numerous familiar short poems, and longer pieces such as *Tintern Abbey*, *The Prelude*, *The Excursion*, &c. *The Waggoner*, one of his earlier pieces, composed in 1805, in which the Waggoner, Benjamin, succeeds in driving his waggon past the Swan Inn without stopping to drink, although

"He knows it to his cost, good Man!

Who does not know the famous Swan?"

26. *Sir Walter Scott* (1771-1832), poet and novelist. Wrote *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, *Marmion*, *The Lady of the Lake*, &c., in verse. His novels include *Waverley*, *Guy Mannering*, *Ivanhoe*, *Kenilworth*, *Quentin Durward*, *The Talisman*.

27. *Michael*, a pastoral poem by Wordsworth, written in 1800:

"Near the tumultuous brook of Greenhead Ghyll,
In that deep valley, Michael had designed
To build a sheepfold."

28. *vagabond*, pedestrian on a walking tour.

29. *cabinet*, collection.

well as sages. That moral paragon, Dr. Arnold,¹¹ was one of them; Thomson,¹² the author of *The City of Dreadful Night*, was another. Bishop Selwyn¹³ even put the duty of lying in bed on a moral plane. "I did once rise early," he said, "but I felt so vain all the morning and so sleepy all the afternoon that I determined not to do it again." He stayed in bed to mortify his pride, to make himself humble. And is not humility one of the cardinal virtues of a good Christian? I have fancied myself that people who rise early are slightly self-righteous. They can't help feeling a little scornful of us sluggards. And we know it. Humility is the badge of all our tribe. We are not proud of lying in bed. We are ashamed—and happy. The noblest sluggard of us all has stated our case for us. "No man practises so well as he writes," said Dr. Johnson.¹⁴ "I have all my life been lying till noon; yet I tell all young men, and tell them with great sincerity, that nobody who does not rise early will ever do any good."

Of course we pay the penalty. We do not catch the early worm. When we turn out all the bargains¹⁵ have gone, and we are left only with the odds and ends. From a practical point of view, we have no defence. We know that an early start is the secret of success. It used to be said of the Duke of Newcastle¹⁶ that he always went about as though he had got up half an hour late, and was trying all day to catch it up. And history has recorded what a grotesque failure he was in politics. When someone asked Nelson¹⁷ for the secret of his success he replied: "Well, you see, I always manage to be a quarter of an hour in front of the other fellow." And the recipe holds good to-day. When the inner history of the battle of the

Falkland Islands ¹⁸ is told in detail it will be found that it was the early start insisted on by the one man of military genius and vision we have produced in this war that gave us that priceless victory.

And if you have ever been on a walking tour or a cycling tour you know that early rising is the key of the business. Start early and you are master of your programme and your fate. You can linger by the way, take a dip in the mountain tarn, lie under the shadow of a great rock in the hot afternoon, and arrive at the valley inn in comfortable time for the evening meal. Start late and you are the slave of the hours. You chase them with weary feet, pass the tarn with the haste of a despatch bearer ¹⁹ though you are dying for a bathe and arrive when the roast and boiled ²⁰ are cleared away and the merry company are doing a "traverse" ²¹ around the skirting board of the billiard room. Happy reader, if you know the inn I mean—the jolly inn at Wastdale Head.²²

No, whether from the point of view of business or pleasure, worldly wisdom or spiritual satisfaction, there is nothing to be said in our defence. All that we can say for lying in bed is what Foote ²³—I think it was Foote—said about the rum. "I went into a public-house," he said, "and heard one man call for some rum because he was hot, and another call for some rum because he was cold. Then I called for some rum because I liked it." We sluggards had better make the same clean breast of the business. We lie in bed because we like it. Just that. Nothing more. We like it. We claim no virtue, ask no indulgence, accept with humility the rebukes of the strenuous.

As for me, I have a licence—nay, I have more; I have a duty. It is my duty to lie in bed ‘o’ mornings until the day is well aired. For I burn the midnight oil, and the early blackbird—the first of our choir to awake—has often saluted me on my way home. Therefore I lie in bed in the morning looking at the ceiling and listening to the sounds of the busy world without a twinge of conscience. If you were listening, you would hear me laugh softly to myself as I give the pillow another shake and thank Providence for having given me a job that enables me to enjoy the privileges of the sluggard without incurring the odium that he so richly deserves.

NOTES

1. *my spirit*, “the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.”
2. *choristers*, the skylark and other early birds.
3. *matins*, the morning service of the Church. The birds are calling him to join them in their praise of the Creator.
4. “*the early pipe*”, from *Tears, Idle Tears*, by Tennyson (1809–92), nineteenth-century poet, and Poet-Laureate of England. His longer works include *In Memoriam*, *The Idylls of the King*, *Maud*, *Ode on Wellington*, and *The Princess*, in which this little song occurs:
 “Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns
 The earliest pipe of half-awakened birds.”
5. *meet the sun upon the upland lawn*, a reference to one of the lines in the *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*, by Gray (1716–71):
 “Haply some hoary-headed swain may say,
 ‘Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn
 Brushing with hasty steps the dews away
 To meet the sun upon the upland lawn.’”
6. *Tyrol*, the Alpine district due north of Venice.
7. *Clough*, a friend of Matthew Arnold, who composed the fine elegy *Thyrsis* upon his death. The stanza is quoted from the little poem *Say Not the Struggle Naught Availeth*.
8. *Matterhorn*, &c., peaks of the Alps.
9. *handicap*, a handicap race.
10. “*lying down*”, metaphorically, “without resistance”.

11. *Dr. Arnold*, headmaster of Rugby, and father of Matthew Arnold.

12. *Thomson*, James (1834-82), Scottish poet, author of *The City of Dreadful Night*, who died in poverty, victim of his own intemperance.

13. *Bishop Selwyn* (1809-78), the first bishop of New Zealand, later bishop of Lichfield. In recognition of his great work for the Church, Selwyn College at Cambridge was founded in his memory in 1882.

14. *Dr. Johnson* (1709-84), poet, essayist and literary dictator of the eighteenth century. Wrote, *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, *Rasselas*, *The Rambler*, *The Idler*, *Lives of the Poets*, and edited Shakespeare, besides producing his famous Dictionary. His *Life* by Boswell is one of the immortal biographies.

15. *bargains*, in the shops. One must shop early to obtain the bargains.

16. *Duke of Newcastle*, died 1768, an eighteenth-century statesman.

17. *Nelson*, Admiral Lord Nelson, born 1758, killed at the battle of Trafalgar in 1805.

18. *battle of the Falkland Islands*, a British naval victory during the Great War.

19. *despatch bearer*, a soldier carrying important messages in war-time.

20. *roast and boiled*, the meat and vegetables forming the chief course of the inn dinner.

21. *traverse*, a term used in mountaineering to denote a difficult crossing along a rock-face. The inn guests, in merry mood after dinner, were climbing round the walls of the billiard room.

22. *Wastdale Head*, see No. 20, page 174.

23. *Foote*, Samuel, eighteenth-century writer of comedies, actor and humorist.

No. 22.—A Visit to Coverley Hall

SIR J. G. FRAZER

Sir J. G. Frazer, born 1854, is best known as the author of a brilliant work on primitive religions and beliefs, *The Golden Bough*; but he is also celebrated as an essayist.

In this essay he establishes with delightful verisimilitude the illusion of a real historical Sir Roger de Coverley, while the intimate knowledge he reveals of the style and matter of the "Coverley Papers" betrays his love for them and at the same time increases ours.

Having undertaken to edit the essays in which Sir Roger de Coverley plays a leading part, I naturally formed a wish to visit the old knight's pleasant seat¹ in Worcestershire, where the Spectator passed the month of July with him in rural retirement more than two hundred years ago. I was the more desirous of doing so, because my researches into the history of the Spectator Club had led me to believe, that on the dissolution of the club many of the papers relating to it had been sent for safe-keeping to Captain Sentry,² Sir Roger's heir, and that some of them at least were still preserved in the muniment room³ at Coverley Hall. Accordingly I wrote to inquire of the present owner⁴ of the Hall, and received from him a very courteous letter in reply. He informed me that he had in his possession a considerable number of papers

concerning the club, that he had never himself examined them with attention, but that I should be free to do so, and to publish anything of interest I might find in them, if I would pay him a visit and examine the documents on the spot, as he valued them too highly to trust them to the hazards of the post. He only stipulated that I should not make his name public, nor drop any hint as to the part of Worcestershire in which Coverley is situated; for he leads, as he told me, a very retired life on his ancestral estate, and he fears that, were the hall better known, the fame of Sir Roger might attract many visitors, whom he could not admit without inconvenience, nor refuse admittance without discourtesy.*⁵ Needless to say I gladly accepted his kind invitation and willingly gave the required pledge of secrecy. My wish was to visit the old Hall in summer, that I might see it as the Spectator himself saw it in those bright July days⁶ of 1711; but legal business (for like a well-known member of the Spectator Club I am a Templar⁷) detained me in town last year all through the summer, and it was not until late in the autumn that I was able to go down into Worcestershire. Yet the delay had its compensation, for the autumn was one of unusual beauty.

*Well-informed readers need hardly be reminded that the name of Coverley village and hall was changed in the later years of the eighteenth century, and no longer appears on modern maps. An old map of Arrow-smith's is, I believe, the last which marks the place under the name of Cuverly (*sic*). The circumstances under which the change of name took place were remarkable and peculiar. They are fully related in the *Annual Register*, and more concisely in an excellent article in *The Dictionary of National Biography*, to which, for obvious reasons, I am precluded from referring more particularly. Some trifling errors of detail crept into the original article, but these, I am glad to observe, have been corrected in the second edition of the *Dictionary*.

Never, perhaps, within the memory of men now living did summer fade so slowly and, as it were, so reluctantly through such exquisite gradations of mellow sunshine and glorious colouring into the greyness and sadness of winter. In that gorgeous sunset of the year I journeyed down to Worcestershire. After being long immured in the smoke and grime of London, it was a pure joy to me to drink in the green landscape, with its fields and meadows, its winding rivers fringed by pale willows, its old manors embosomed in the trees, its peaceful villages nestling round the churches with their grey time-worn spires or ivied towers, as they floated silently, like a dream of heaven, past the window at which I sat. Over all rested, like a benediction, the blue sky flecked with white clouds of a lovely October day.

But mindful of my promise I will say no more of my journey, and will give no clue that could lead to the identification of the Hall. I will only say, that I have visited all Sir Roger's old haunts and seen them with my own eyes. I have walked at sunset in the long avenue of elms⁸ and heard the rooks cawing overhead, and at a later hour I have watched from the same spot the moon rising behind the ivy-clad ruins of the abbey⁹ and silvering the whole scene with her gentle beams. I have sat in Sir Roger's pew¹⁰ of black oak just under the pulpit—and have inspected the monuments of the Coverley family, which break the severe simplicity of the walls from the uncouth effigy of the Crusader with his upturned face, clasped sword, and crossed legs, down to the marble tablets of generals and admirals, of deans and prebends,¹¹ in the reigns of Charles the Second and James the Second. I

have paced the long gallery where the family portraits¹² hang. They hang just as the Spectator describes them, but naturally not a few have been added since his time; for though the name of Coverley became extinct with Sir Roger, the family has continued unbroken to this day, and, without rising to posts of the highest distinction, has served its king and country in peace and war, on sea and land, with credit to itself and advantage to the public. Even among the portraits which the Spectator must have seen, I noted not a few worthy of remark, which he passed over in silence. For instance, there is a portrait by Vandyck¹³ of a dark handsome man in a shining cuirass and great plumed hat, which throws half his face into deep shadow. He bore the king's commission and fell at the battle of Naseby.¹⁴ Another of the family in the same century rose to be Admiral of the White under the sailor king, James the Second.¹⁵ There is a portrait of him in his admiral's dress by Kneller.¹⁶ The face is rufous, bronzed and weatherbeaten; his right hand rests on the hilt of his sword, the left sleeve is empty¹⁷ and pinned to his breast, which is covered with orders. The tradition at Coverley is, that he lost his arm at the battle of La Hogue,¹⁸ his ship being one of those that pressed hardest on the French flagship, the *Royal Sun*, when that gallant ship, alone and surrounded by enemies, fell sullenly back, the fleur-de-lys¹⁹ still flaunting proudly at the mast-head, all her portholes sputtering fire, and all her scuppers spouting blood, till she was lost to her pursuers in the darkness. Next to the portrait of the admiral hangs the picture of a grave divine in cassock and flowing wig, seated in a pensive attitude with a great

book open before him, and the spire of Coverley church appearing over very green trees and under a very blue sky in the background. He was a younger son, and held the family living of Coverley for many years. They say he was a learned man, a Fellow of his college at one of the universities (I forget which), and very deep in Hebrew and the mathematics. In later life he devoted much of his ample leisure—for the parish duties of Coverley in those days were not very onerous—to calculating the number of the Beast in Revelations: ²⁰ he even meditated a treatise on the subject which no doubt would have done him great honour, had he lived to publish it, but unfortunately he died before he had completed his calculations. Among these grave and gallant men there are portraits of fair ladies. I noticed one in particular of a blooming maid-of-honour, who danced with Charles the Second at the first ball which the Merry Monarch gave at Whitehall ²¹ after his restoration.

But of all the portraits in the gallery, the gem, in my eyes, is that of dear Sir Roger himself. I came on it suddenly, and without a hint of whom it represented. For I had asked of the kind owner of the Hall, that I might walk by myself for a little in the long gallery and give myself up, without interruption, to the meditations which the place was fitted to evoke. I was pacing up and down in a fit of musing. It was near sunset, and the light was failing; but suddenly the departing luminary broke through a bank of clouds in the west, and his long level beams, shooting through a lofty oriel, fell full on a portrait which at once riveted my attention. I could not mistake it. The tall, slender, graceful figure—the features

of almost feminine delicacy—the frank honest blue eyes—the pleasant smile—the air of old-world courtesy—all tinged and, as it were, fused into tenderness by something childlike and appealing, almost pathetic—it was Sir Roger himself. He was dressed in hunting costume, with his dogs about him and a rather florid landscape in the background. The portrait is useful; there is a doubt whether it is by Lely²² or Kneller. I am no great judge of pictures, but it seemed to me to be in the best manner of Lely.

I have slept in the haunted chamber which was shut up when Sir Roger took possession of the Hall, and which he caused to be exorcised²³ by the chaplain. To judge by experience, the exorcism was effectual; for though I lay long awake, I saw nothing more ghostly than the dance of shadows cast by the firelight on the ceiling (the evening being damp and chilly they had lighted a bright fire on the hearth), and heard nothing more blood-curdling than the tick of a death-watch²⁴ behind the black wainscot, the croaking of frogs in the lily-lake under my window, and the hooting of owls in the elms. With these sounds in my ears I feel fast asleep, and slept as sweetly as ever I did in my life, till a sunbeam stealing through a chink in the shutters woke me, and I sat up wondering where I was.

Before I quit the Hall I will only add, that sitting in the great oriel, where the arms of the Coverleys are blazoned on the panes, I chanced to take up an old volume that was lying on the window-seat. What was my joy to find it to be Baker's *Chronicle*,²⁵ the very copy that Sir Roger was wont to peruse, sitting in his high armchair by the great

fireplace of the hall after a hard day's hunting! I almost thought I could recognize the old knight's thumb-marks on some of the yellow dog-eared leaves. I fancy he must have nodded over some of these same pages and wakened with a start, when the ponderous volume fell with a crash to the floor.

Then, too, I have seen the cottage of Moll White,²⁶ the witch. Her memory survives in the village, and anybody can point out her former abode. It is one of a row of whitewashed cottages, with high thatched roofs, which overlook the common, a long straggling green bounded by tall elms and enclosing in its midst a pool, where children paddle, ducks swim, and on hot summer days the cows stand in the water with the flies buzzing about their heads. Beyond and above the elms, at the far end of the common, appears a line of low hills, which, when I saw them, showed blue and faint through the gathering mists of an autumn afternoon. Moll's cottage is well kept, and except for a tabby cat, which sat purring on the doorstep and rubbed itself affectionately against my legs, there was nothing about it to suggest that it had ever been the home of a witch. There were pots of flowers in the windows, creepers growing over the porch, and a linnet singing merrily in a cage above the door.*

* I have described as I saw it what is certainly now shown as Moll White's cottage. But in my capacity of editor I am bound to point out that neither the style nor the situation of the cottage answers well to the Spectator's description of it as a "hovel, which stood in a solitary corner under the side of the wood". Perhaps the cottage has been rebuilt and improved since Moll's day, and others may have grown up about it. Or can it be that the identification is an arbitrary one, devised perhaps by some ingenious owner of the cottage for the sake of turning a dishonest penny? Now that I think of it, I did slip a small silver coin into the hand of the smiling old dame who let me peep in at her kitchen, and I dare say others have done so before

The last of the scenes associated with Sir Roger which I visited in the neighbourhood was the Saracen's Head.²⁷ It is a little wayside inn standing on the brow of a hill, where the road dips down rather steeply into a valley. But before turning to examine the famous signboard I stood for a moment to contemplate the prospect from the height; for the sun was setting behind the line of blue hills I have spoken of, and his last rays spread a soft radiant glory over the woods in the valley, some of them already stripped and bare, others still wrapt in a gorgeous pall of autumnal red and gold. Through their gaps I could catch glimpses of a winding river, its surface here darkened by the evening shadows, there gleaming like fire with reflections of the celestial glory. The signboard dangles from an iron stanchion above the door of the inn. The head of the Saracen, which had lately received a fresh coat of paint, is certainly very ferocious, but under the long moustachios and whiskers I fancied I could still trace a faint, a ridiculous resemblance to the kindly features of Sir Roger.

That was the end of my visit to Coverley. Next day I returned to London and resumed my usual duties. I have seldom enjoyed anything so much as this excursion into Worcestershire, and I shall always treasure the memory of it. Curiously enough, though it happened so

me. I am sorry to cast any doubt on the accuracy of a picturesque tradition and nothing but a strict regard for truth could induce me to do so. But throughout these my researches it had been my constant aim to weigh every statement, and to set down none for which there is not either conclusive evidence or at all events a high degree of probability. I could never consent, like some historians, to embellish a plain narrative of facts with a varnish of fiction, or to tickle the imagination of my readers at the expense of their understanding.

lately, there is something far away about it in my mind as if it had taken place many years instead of only a few months ago. Indeed, writing as I now do in the heart of London, with the rumble of its ceaseless traffic in my ears, the thought of the quiet old Hall, the tall elms, the cawing rooks, the village church, and the cottages on the green in the evening twilight, comes back on me like a beautiful dream ²⁸ rather than the recollection of a waking reality.

NOTES

1. *pleasant seat*, described in *Spectator* No. 106.
2. *Captain Sentry*, described in No. 2 (see page 13), and in the scene of Sir Roger's death (No. 517). He is the old gentleman's nephew.
3. *muniment room*, the room in which documents are kept.
4. *present owner*; thus maintaining the illusion of historical fact.
5. *without discourtesy*; students will notice in this sentence the clever copying of the periodic style of Addison. The footnote maintains the illusion of historical fact.
6. *bright July days*; the date of No. 106 is 2nd July, 1711.
7. *a Temple*, see No. 2 (page 11).
8. *avenue of elms*, described in No. 110.
9. *ruins of the abbey*, also in No. 110.
10. *Sir Roger's pew*, described in No. 112.
11. *prebends*, the stipends of the canons of a cathedral. The author means the *prebendaries* who enjoy these stipends.
12. *family portraits*, the picture gallery is described in No. 109.
13. *Vandyck*, Sir Anthony (1599-1641), famous portrait painter; born at Antwerp in Belgium, but lived for some time in London, and died there.
14. *Naseby*, the battle which decided the first Civil War, and ended in the defeat of the Royalists by Cromwell and Fairfax. It was fought in 1645.
15. *James the Second*, reigned 1685 to 1688, was keenly interested in naval matters.
16. *Kneller*, born at Lubeck in Germany in 1648, and secured the patronage of Charles II by painting his portrait. He thereafter painted the portraits of many celebrities, and was knighted by George I in 1715.
17. *the left sleeve is empty*, reminding us of the well-known portrait of Nelson.

18. *La Hogue*, a naval battle in 1692 between the English and Dutch in alliance against the French.

19. *fleur-de-lys*, the lily is the national emblem of France.

20. *Beast in Revelations*, referring to the thirteenth chapter of the *Book of Revelation*. The eighteenth verse runs as follows: "Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six."

21. *Whitehall*, then a Royal Palace.

22. *Lely*, Sir Peter (1617-80), of Dutch birth. His portraits are nearly as celebrated as Vandyck's, and he put warmth and sentiment into his work.

23. *exorcised*, described in No. 110.

24. *death-watch*, an insect which eats into wood.

25. *Baker's Chronicle*, Sir Roger's reading of this volume is described in No. 269. It was a chronicle of the Kings of England.

26. *Moll White*, described in No. 117.

27. *Saracen's Head*, described in No. 122 (see page 23).

28. *like a beautiful dream*, giving us the hint of the author's fanciful flight.

No. 23.—Abraham Lincoln

JAMES BRYCE

Viscount Bryce, jurist, historian, politician and diplomat, was born in 1838. His *Holy Roman Empire* appeared in 1864. By 1880 he had entered Parliament, ultimately securing cabinet rank. In 1888 he wrote *The American Commonwealth*, and in 1903 *Studies in Contemporary Biography*. He became ambassador to the United States in 1907. The subject of this essay, Abraham Lincoln, who was born in 1809 and assassinated in 1865, was a self-made man who rose to be President of the United States at the most critical time in its history, the eve of the American Civil War of 1861.

No man since Washington ¹ has become to Americans so familiar or so beloved a figure as Abraham Lincoln. He is to them the representative and typical American, the man who best embodies the political ideals of the nation. He is typical in the fact that he sprang from the masses of the people, that he remained through his whole career a man of the people, that his chief desire was to be in accord with the beliefs and wishes of the people, that he never failed to trust in the people and to rely on their support. Every native American knows his life and his speeches. His anecdotes and his witticisms have passed into the thought and the conversation of the whole nation as those of no other statesman have done.

He belongs, however, not only to the United States,

but to the whole of civilized mankind. It is no exaggeration to say that he has, within the last thirty years, grown to be a conspicuous figure in the history of the modern world. Without him, the course of events, not only in the western hemisphere but in Europe also, would have been different, for he was called to guide at the greatest crisis ² of its fate a State already mighty, and now far more mighty than in his days, and the guidance he gave has affected the march of events ever since. A life and a character such as his ought to be known to and comprehended by Europeans as well as by Americans. Among Europeans, it is especially Englishmen who ought to appreciate him and understand the significance of his life, for he came of an English stock, he spoke the English tongue, his action told upon the progress of events and the shaping of opinion in all British communities everywhere more than it has done upon any other nation outside America itself.

This collection ³ of Lincoln's speeches seeks to make him known by his words as readers of history know him by his deeds. In popularly governed countries the great statesman is almost of necessity an orator, though his eminence as a speaker may be no true measure either of his momentary power or of his permanent fame, for wisdom, courage, and tact bear little direct relation to the gift for speech. But whether that gift be present in greater or in lesser degree, the character and ideas of a statesman are best studied through his own words. This is particularly true of Lincoln, because he was not what may be called a professional orator. There have been famous orators whose speeches we may read for the beauty of

their language or for the wealth of ideas they contain, with comparatively little regard to the circumstances of time and place that led to their being delivered. Lincoln was not one of these. His speeches need to be studied in close relation to the occasions which called them forth. They are not philosophical lucubrations ⁴ or brilliant displays of rhetoric. They are a part of his life. They are the expression of his convictions, and derive no small part of their weight and dignity from the fact that they deal with grave and urgent questions. Few great characters stand out so clearly revealed by their words, whether spoken or written, as he does.

Accordingly Lincoln's discourses are not like those of nearly all the men whose eloquence has won them fame. When we think of such men as Pericles,⁵ Demosthenes,⁶ Æschines,⁷ Cicero,⁸ Hortensius,⁹ Burke,¹⁰ Sheridan,¹¹ Erskine,¹² Canning,¹³ Webster,¹⁴ Gladstone,¹⁵ Bright,¹⁶ Massillon,¹⁷ Vergniaud,¹⁸ Castelar,¹⁹ we think of exuberance of ideas or of phrases, of a command of appropriate similes or metaphors, of the gifts of invention and of exposition, of imaginative flights, or outbursts of passion fit to stir and rouse an audience to like passion. We think of the orator as gifted with a powerful or finely modulated voice, an imposing presence, a graceful delivery. Or if—remembering that Lincoln was by profession a lawyer and practised until he became President of the United States—we think of the special gifts which mark the forensic orator,²⁰ we should expect to find a man of ingenuity and subtlety, one dexterous in handling his case in such wise ²¹ as to please and capture the judge or the jury whom he addresses, one skilled in those rhetorical devices and strokes of art

which can be used, when need be, to engage the listener's feelings and distract his mind from the real merits of the issue.

Of all this kind of talent there was in Lincoln but little. He was not an artful pleader; indeed, it was said of him that he could argue well only those cases in the justice of which he personally believed, and was unable to make the worse appear the better reason. For most of the qualities which the world admires in Cicero or in Burke we should look in vain in Lincoln's speeches. They are not fine pieces of exquisite diction, fit to be declaimed as school exercises or set before students as models of composition.

What, then, are their merits? and why do they deserve to be valued and remembered? How comes it that a man of first-rate powers was deficient in qualities appertaining to his own profession which men less remarkable have possessed?

To answer this question, let us first ask what were the preparation and training Abraham Lincoln had for oratory, whether political or forensic.

Born in rude and abject poverty, he had never any education except what he gave himself, till he was approaching manhood. Not even books wherewith to inform and train his mind were within his reach. No school, no university, no legal faculty had any part in training his powers. When he became a lawyer and a politician, the years most favourable to continuous study had already passed, and the opportunities he found for reading were very scanty. He knew but few authors in general literature, though he knew those few thoroughly.

He taught himself a little mathematics, but he could read no language save his own, and can have had only the faintest acquaintance with European history or with any branch of philosophy.

The want of regular education was not made up for by the persons among whom his lot was cast. Till he was a grown man, he never moved in any society from which he could learn those things with which the mind of an orator or a statesman ought to be stored. Even after he had gained some legal practice, there was for many years no one for him to mix with except the petty practitioners of a petty town, men nearly all of whom knew little more than he did himself.

Schools gave him nothing, and society gave him nothing. But he had a powerful intellect and a resolute will. Isolation fostered not only self-reliance but the habit of reflection, and, indeed, of prolonged and intense reflection. He made all that he knew a part of himself. He thought everything out for himself. His convictions were his own—clear and coherent. He was not positive or opinionated, he pondered and hesitated long before he decided on his course. But though he could keep a policy in suspense, waiting for events to guide him, he did not waver. He paused and reconsidered, but it was never his way either to go back upon a decision once made or to waste time in vain regrets that all he expected had not been attained. He took advice readily, and left many things to his ministers; but he did not lean upon his advisers. Without vanity or ostentation, he was always independent, self-contained, prepared to take full responsibility for his acts.

That he was keenly observant of all that passed under his eyes, that his mind played freely round everything it touched, we know from the accounts of his talk, which first made him famous in the town and neighbourhood where he lived. His humour, and his memory for anecdotes which he could bring out to good purpose at the right moment, are qualities which Europe deems distinctively American, but no great man of action in the nineteenth century, even in America, possessed them in the same measure. Seldom has so acute a power of observation been found united to so abundant a power of sympathy.

These remarks may seem to belong to a study of his character rather than of his speeches, yet they are not irrelevant, because the interest of his speeches lies in their revelation of his character. Let us, however, return to the speeches and to the letters, some of which, given in this volume, are scarcely less noteworthy than are the speeches.

What are the distinctive merits of these speeches and letters? There is less humour in them than his reputation as a humorist would have led us to expect. They are serious, grave, practical. We feel that the man does not care to play over the surface of the subject, or to use it as a way of displaying his cleverness. He is trying to get right down to the very foundation of the matter and tell us what his real thoughts about it are. In this respect he sometimes reminds us of Bismarck's²² speeches, which, in their rude, broken, forth-darting way, always go straight to their destined aim; always hit the nail on the head. So too, in their effort to grapple with fundamental facts, Lincoln's bear a sort of likeness to Cromwell's²³

speeches, though Cromwell has far less power of utterance, and always seems to be wrestling with the difficulty of finding language to convey to others what is plain, true and weighty to himself. This difficulty makes the great Protector, though we can usually see what he is driving at, frequently confused and obscure. Lincoln, however, is always clear. Simplicity, directness and breadth are the notes of his thought. Aptness, clearness, and again, simplicity, are the notes of his diction. The American speakers of his generation, like most of those of the preceding generation but unlike those of that earlier generation to which Alexander Hamilton,²⁴ John Adams,²⁵ Marshall,²⁶ and Madison²⁷ belonged, were generally infected by a floridity which made them a by-word in Europe. Even men of brilliant talent, such as Edward Everett,²⁸ were by no means free from this straining after effect by highly coloured phrases and theatrical effects. Such faults have to-day virtually vanished from the United States, largely from a change in public taste, to which perhaps the example set by Lincoln himself may have contributed. In the forties and fifties florid rhetoric was rampant, especially in the West and South, where taste was less polished than in the older States. That Lincoln escaped it is a striking mark of his independence as well as of his greatness. There is no superfluous ornament in his orations, nothing tawdry, nothing otiose. For the most part, he addresses the reason of his hearers, and credits them with desiring to have none but solid arguments laid before them. When he does appeal to emotion, he does it quietly, perhaps even solemnly. The note struck is always a high note. The impressiveness of the appeal comes not from fervid

vehemence of language, but from the sincerity of his own convictions. Sometimes one can see that through its whole course the argument is suffused by the speaker's feeling, and when the time comes for the feeling to be directly expressed, it glows not with fitful flashes, but with the steady heat of an intense and strenuous soul.

The impression which most of the speeches leave on the reader is that their matter has been carefully thought over even when the words have not been learnt by heart. But there is an anecdote that on one occasion, early in his career, Lincoln went to a public meeting not in the least intending to speak, but presently being called for by the audience, rose in obedience to the call, and delivered a long address so ardent and thrilling that the reporters dropped their pencils and, absorbed in watching him, forgot to take down what he said. It has also been stated, on good authority, that on his way in the railroad cars to the dedication of the monument on the field of Gettysburg,²⁹ he turned to a Pennsylvanian³⁰ gentleman who was sitting beside him and remarked, "I suppose I shall be expected to say something this afternoon; lend me a pencil and a bit of paper," and that he thereupon jotted down the notes of a speech which has become the best known and best remembered of all his utterances, so that some of its words and sentences have passed into the minds of all educated men everywhere.

That famous Gettysburg speech is the best example one could desire of the characteristic quality of Lincoln's eloquence. It is a short speech. It is wonderfully terse in expression. It is quiet, so quiet that at the moment it did not make upon that audience, an audience wrought

up by a long and highly-decorated harangue from one of the prominent orators of the day, an impression at all commensurate to that which it began to make as soon as it was read over America and Europe. There is in it not a touch of what we call rhetoric, or of any striving after effect. Alike in thought and in language it is simple, plain, direct. But it states certain truths and principles in phrases so aptly chosen and so forcible, that one feels as if those truths could have been conveyed in no other words, and as if this deliverance of them were made for all time. Words so simple and so strong could have come only from one who had meditated so long upon the primal facts of American history and popular government that the truths those facts taught him had become like the truths of mathematics in their clearness, their breadth, and their precision.

The speeches on Slavery read strange to us now, when slavery as a living system has been dead for forty years, dead and buried hell deep under the detestation of mankind. It is hard for those whose memory does not go back to 1865 to realize that down till then it was not only a terrible fact, but was defended—defended by many otherwise good men, defended not only by pseudo-scientific anthropologists as being in the order of nature, but by ministers of the Gospel, out of the sacred Scriptures, as part of the ordinances of God. Lincoln's position, the position of one who had to induce slave-owning fellow-citizens to listen to him and admit persuasion into their heated and prejudiced minds, did not allow him to denounce it with horror, as we can all so easily do to-day. But though his language is calm and restrained, he never

condescends to palter with slavery. He shows its innate evils and dangers with unanswerable force. The speech on the Dred Scott decision is a lucid, close and cogent piece of reasoning which, in its wide view of Constitutional issues, sometimes reminds one of Webster, sometimes even of Burke, though it does not equal the former in weight nor the latter in splendour of diction.

Among the letters, perhaps the most impressive is that written to Mrs. Bixley, the mother of five sons who had died fighting for the Union in the armies of the North. It is short, and it deals with a theme on which hundreds of letters are written daily. But I do not know where the nobility of self-sacrifice for a great cause, and of the consolation which the thought of a sacrifice so made should bring, is set forth with such simple and pathetic beauty. Deep must be the fountains from which there issues so pure a stream.

The career of Lincoln is often held up to ambitious young Americans as an example to show what a man may achieve by his native strength, with no advantages of birth or environment or education. In this there is nothing improper, nothing fanciful. The moral is one which may well be drawn, and in which those on whose early life Fortune has not smiled may find encouragement. But the example is, after all, no great encouragement to ordinary men, for Lincoln was an extraordinary man.

He triumphed over the adverse conditions of his early years because Nature had bestowed on him high and rare powers. Superficial observers who saw his homely aspect and plain manners, and noted that his fellow-townsmen, when asked why they so trusted him, answered

that it was for his common-sense, failed to see that his common-sense was a part of his genius. What is common-sense but the power of seeing the fundamentals of any practical question, and of disengaging them from the accidental and transient features that may overlies these fundamentals—the power, to use a familiar expression, of getting down to bed rock? One part of this power is the faculty for perceiving what the average man will think and can be induced to do. This is what keeps the superior mind in touch with the ordinary mind, and this is perhaps why the name of “common-sense” is used, because the superior mind seems in its power of comprehending others to be itself a part of the general sense of the community. All men of high practical capacity have this power. It is the first condition of success. But in men who have received a philosophical or literary education there is a tendency to embellish, for the purposes of persuasion, or perhaps for their own gratification, the language in which they recommend their conclusions, or to state those conclusions in the light of large general principles, a tendency which may, unless carefully watched, carry them too high above the heads of the crowd. Lincoln, never having had such an education, spoke to the people as one of themselves. He seemed to be saying not only what each felt, but expressing the feeling just as each would have expressed it. In reality, he was quite as much above his neighbours in insight as was the polished orator or writer, but the plain directness of his language seemed to keep him on their level. His strength lay less in the form and vesture of the thought than in the thought itself, in the large, simple,

practical view which he took of the position. And thus, to repeat what has been said already, the sterling merit of these speeches of his, that which made them effective when they were delivered and makes them worth reading to-day, is to be found in the justness of his conclusions, and their fitness to the circumstances of the time. When he rose into higher air,³¹ when his words were clothed with stateliness and solemnity, it was the force of his conviction and the emotion that thrilled through his utterance, that printed the words deep upon the minds and drove them home to the hearts of the people.

What is a great man? Common speech, which after all must be our guide to the sense of the terms which the world uses, gives this name to many sorts of men. How far the greatness lies in the power and range of the intellect, how far in the strength of the will, how far in elevation of view and aim and purpose—this is a question too large to be debated here. But of Abraham Lincoln it may be truly said that in his greatness all three elements were present. He had not the brilliance, either in thought or word or act, that dazzles, nor the restless activity that occasionally pushes to the front even persons with gifts not of the first orders. He was a patient, thoughtful, melancholy man, whose intelligence, working sometimes slowly but always steadily and surely, was capacious enough to embrace, and vigorous enough to master, the incomparably difficult facts and problems he was called to deal with. His executive talent showed itself not in sudden and startling strokes, but in the calm serenity with which he formed his judgments and laid his plans, in the undismayed firmness with which he adhered to

them in the face of popular clamour, of conflicting counsels from his advisers, sometimes, 'even, of what others deemed all but hopeless failure. These were the qualities needed in one who had to pilot the Republic through the 'heaviest storm ³² that had ever broken upon it. But the mainspring of his power, and the truest evidence of his greatness, lay in the nobility of his aims, in the fervour of his conviction, in the stainless rectitude which guided his action and won for him the confidence of the people. Without these things neither the vigour of his intellect nor the firmness of his will would have availed.

There is a vulgar saying that all great men are unscrupulous. Of him it may rather be said that the note of greatness we feel in his thinking and his speech and his conduct had its source in the loftiness and purity of his character. Lincoln's is one of the careers that refute this imputation on human nature.

NOTES

1. *Washington* (1731-99); George Washington, first President of the United States of America.

2. *greatest crisis*, the American Civil War (1861-65).

3. *This collection*. This essay is the introduction to the *Speeches and Letters of Abraham Lincoln*.

4. *philosophical lucubrations*, thoughtful, meditative compositions.

5. *Pericles* (circa 499-429 B.C.), illustrious Athenian statesman, leader and orator, whose eloquence the Athenians compared to thunder and lightning.

6. *Demosthenes* (382-322 B.C.), another celebrated Athenian statesman and leader. He has been called the prince of orators, and his speeches models of eloquence.

7. *Æschines*, an Athenian, rival of Demosthenes, but a less gifted orator.

8. *Cicero* (106-43 B.C.), Roman senator and great orator and writer. He has been called the father of Roman eloquence.

9. *Hortensius* (113-50 B.C.), also a celebrated Roman orator, the

predecessor of Cicero, who bestowed great commendations upon the other's eloquence. His speeches have not come down to us.

10. *Burke* (1729-97), the most literary of British orators, whose speeches were polished to an extreme brilliance.

11. *Sheridan* (1751-1816), an Irishman, like Burke, a celebrated parliamentary orator, who attached himself to the party of Charles Fox; but more famous as the author of the well-known comedies, *The Rivals*, *The School for Scandal*, and *The Critic*.

12. *Erskine*; Thomas Lord Erskine (1750-1823), a Scotsman and very eloquent lawyer.

13. *Canning* (1770-1827), a protégé of Pitt, prominent statesman, orator, and Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. He opposed Napoleon, and was described as possessing "the finest logical intellect in Europe".

14. *Webster*; Daniel Webster (1782-1852), distinguished American statesman and orator, and, like Canning, a secretary of state. He has been considered by many as the greatest man, intellectually, whom America has produced. One of his most famous speeches is the Bunker's Hill oration.

15. *Gladstone* (1809-98), Liberal statesman and Prime Minister of the latter half of the nineteenth century. His speeches were coloured by his lofty idealism.

16. *Bright*, John (1811-89), Quaker and Liberal statesman. He was gifted to a very large degree with the passion and fervour of the popular orator, and has been considered by competent critics to be "the greatest master of English oratory of his generation".

17. *Massillon*, Jean Baptiste (1663-1742), a celebrated French bishop and preacher. His sermons, for example his funeral oration on Louis XIV, have been held to be masterpieces of eloquence.

18. *Vergniaud* (1753-93), the leader of the Girondist party of the French Revolution, and one of the most stirring orators of that movement. His speech advocating an appeal to the people decided the fate of Louis XVI. Vergniaud suffered the usual fate of the French revolutionary, being executed as a traitor in 1793.

19. *Castelar* (1832-99), one of Spain's leading statesmen during the middle years of the nineteenth century. In 1854 he attracted attention with his maiden speech. By 1869 his orations were dictating the policy of the Spanish Parliament, and by 1873 he was the ruler of Spain. When he retired into private life, he wrote chiefly on historical topics.

20. *the forensic orator*, the pleader.

21. *in such wise*, in such a manner; a rather obsolete phrase.

22. *Bismarck*, Prince (1815-98), German statesman who subordinated everything to the ascendancy of Prussia. As Chancellor he ruled Germany and controlled its foreign policy for many years but was "dropped" by William II in 1890.

23. *Cromwell*, Oliver (1599-1658), Lord Protector of England. His speeches, edited by Carlyle, gave for the first time a clear idea of the mind of this strong statesman.

24. *Alexander Hamilton* (1757-1804), General and American statesman, Washington's most trusted and confidential friend, and one of the chief builders of the constitution of the United States, of which he was Vice-President.

25. *John Adams* (1735-1804), the second President of the United States, and before that its first ambassador to England.

26. *Marshall* (1755-1835), Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, who was called upon to expound its constitution at a very critical period in its history.

27. *Madison* (1751-1836), fourth President of the United States.

28. *Edward Everett* (1794-1865), Governor of Massachusetts in 1835. Ambassador to Great Britain in 1841. President of Harvard University in 1846. A very eloquent orator. His speech after the battle of Gettysburg is frequently quoted as an example of perfect oratory.

29. *Gettysburg*, fought on the 1st to 3rd July, 1863, was the turning point of the American Civil War, the South being defeated.

30. *Pennsylvania*, an eastern state.

31. *into higher air*, spoke on a higher plane.

32. *the heaviest storm*, the Civil War.

No. 24.—Peterpantheism

HOLBROOK JACKSON

Mr. Holbrook Jackson was born in 1874. He wrote first on Edward FitzGerald and *Omar Khayyām*, and published a study of Bernard Shaw in 1907, followed by a book on the *Great English Novelists* the following year. 1911 saw the volume *Romance and Reality*; 1914, *Southward Ho!* In 1925 he produced a revised study of William Morris, while his *Essays of To-day and Yesterday* appeared in 1927.

This essay is from *Southward Ho!* The title is derived from the dramatic fantasy by Sir James Barrie, *Peter Pan*, the story of the boy who wouldn't grow up.

What ill turn in the trend of evolution gave man the aspiration to grow up? It must have been an evil chance, for the secret desire of all is for eternal youth. No one surely who had his will ¹ of life would dream of growing up, and yet we all not only do it, but succeed in persuading ourselves that we like doing it.

We have even gone so far as to wean the imaginations of children from their rightful heritage ² and make them wish to become big, like father, or good, like mother. These ambitions are now commonplaces of childish imagination. But in spite of it all, the evidence is still against growing up. The purpose of the child is to live, to feel the mysterious presence of life in every limb, and in so far as he does this he is happy. But the purpose

of the adult has become a febrile pursuit of the symbols of life. Real life fills him with dread, and success in his endeavour is his undoing.

Age is a tragedy; and the elderly person strives heroically to make the best of it by covering his retreat with pathetic attempts at superiority and wisdom, little arrogances and vanities, which at bottom deceive nobody, not even himself. For well he knows, as he casts wilful glances at the pranks of childhood, that in spite of his imposing cry of "Eureka!"³ he has found nothing. What profit⁴ has a man if he gain the whole world but lose his own youth? Perhaps, indeed, it would be more becoming in those who have grown up to admit the fact with fitting lamentation and humility, and, instead of flaunting their age with pomp and circumstance,⁵ cover their bodies with sackcloth⁶ and put ashes in their hair.

The great difficulty, however, is that men persist, in spite of bitter experience, in looking upon growing up as a worthy thing. Women are their superiors in this respect. Intuitively they know that age is a *cul-de-sac*,⁷ that it leads not even to heaven, for to get there one has to become as a little child.⁸ This, probably, is why most women disown the passing years.

Still even they grow up; indeed, are not women always a little older than men? Both nature and society seem to have conspired to make them so. But that is no excuse. Human beings ought not to be content to remain the slaves of either. Surely it is by the constant flouting of such authorities that new variations of life are attained. Neither gods nor milleniums are the outcome of passivity. Therefore, gentlewomen, put by your subterfuges about age, for you have been found out; we know you to be

older than we men are, and our immemorial desire is that you should be younger.

Few serious attempts to restore the Golden Age⁹ have been made in modern times, but one of the greatest of these is that of Sir James M. Barrie.¹⁰ *Peter Pan* is more than a Christmas pantomime; it is a contribution to religious drama. It is a mystery play,¹¹ giving significance to the childlike spirit of the universe. *Peter Pan* is a symbol of eternity, of that complete, unchangeable spirit of the world which is superior to the illusion of growing up: that dim vision which has set bounds to the imagination of humanity ever since the elderly person usurped the throne of the child. *Peter Pan* reminds us again that the world has no final use for grown-up things, that cities and civilizations pass away, that mountains and institutions crumble into dust, that weeds are conquering the Coliseum,¹² and that the life of the immemorial Sphinx¹³ is but a matter of time. *Peter Pan* is the emblem of the mystery of vitality, the thing that is always growing, but never grown.

He came among us some years ago, when our faith in the child had nearly gone. But even to-day we shall see that there is no place for little children in the average home, and that when a place is provided for them it is provided because they are a nuisance and a burden to the grown-ups. It might as well be admitted that children irritate us; and this means that we are no longer capable of entering into their kingdom. We revenge ourselves by teaching them all sorts of worthless knowledge. But we teach them nothing so worthless as this facile art of growing up. That is the final and unforgivable act of our hopelessly bewildered lives. We make our peace with

the children by moulding them to our own image: perhaps one of these days, for all things are possible, we shall become wise enough to permit the children to return the compliment.

The desire to make them as we are is the fatal desire of a lost cause. It means that communications with the child-world have been cut off, which is only another way of saying that we have abandoned our alliance with the main tendency of life. We have ceased to grow. We have, in fact, grown up, and are fit only for life's scrap-heap.

We talk of evolution; but half the idea of evolution is illusion, and the other half the assertion of the child-spirit. It is the child-spirit building castles in the air. And our talk of that little sister of evolution, progress, is not any more helpful; for progress is generally nothing more than a vain endeavour to put the clock forward. The only really vital thing in life is the unconscious abandonment of young things—the spirit of play. And if we think for a moment we shall see that it is play, or the contemplation of play, that gives us most joy. We never tire of watching the play of children or of young animals. That is sane and healthy; there are no better things to watch. Our approval links us with the living world again, just as our love of children does. That is why our delight in young life is always tinged with melancholy. Whilst we approve and love the ways of the young, we unconsciously condemn our elderliness. We realize that the most superb adult is a dismal failure beside a child making mud pies or a kitten chasing its tail. But we rarely admit it; when there is a chance of our going so far we become frightened, and, shaking ourselves, we murmur something about sentimentality, and speedily

commence growing old again, thereby displaying our impotence and our ignorance.

The sign that we have accomplished our noble aim, and grown up, is that we no longer have the impulse to play. We go about our business in colourless garments and surroundings, buying and selling and ruling with revolting solemnity. The last glimmering of the spark of play is seen in our shamelessly hiring people to play for us. We hire footballers and cricketers to play games for us, jockeys to ride for us, singers to sing for us, dancers to dance for us, and even pugilists and soldiers to fight for us.

Those who have become as little children will want to do all these things for themselves. They will no more desire to play by proxy¹⁴ than they will desire to live by proxy. Art has been described as the expression of man's joy in his work, and joyful work is the kind of work practised by those who have the courage to be young. It is fundamentally play, and no other kind of work really matters. We have some remote ideas of this when we utter the commonplace that success depends largely upon one's doing the work one likes to do. It is also pretty generally recognized that there is no joy in what is merely laborious. Beyond all men the artist knows this: not because his work is easy, but because he is happy in his work. It is a wonderful game. "I pray God every day," said Corot,¹⁵ "that He will keep me a child; that is to say, that He will enable me to see and draw with the eye of a child." And France heard him sing as he painted. The childhood of the world was in that song and in its results.

Children are unconscious artists in living. How to reach this happy state is another matter; precise rules

cannot be given, because there are none. Perhaps there is no direct way to the Golden Age, and even if there were, few of us would recognize it. However, there is at least one useful rule—that is, never to look upon the Golden Age as past. For the rest, we might follow Peter Pan, and refuse to grow up.

NOTES

1. *had his will*, was allowed his own way.
2. *their rightful heritage*, to remain children as long as they can.
3. *Eureka*, the triumphant cry of the ancient philosopher Archimedes, "I have found it," when he discovered the scientific principle known by his name.
4. *what profit*, from the Bible; *St. Mark*, chap. viii, verse 36: "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"
5. *pomp and circumstance*, from *Othello*, III. iii, 354: "Pride, pomp and circumstance of glorious war."
6. *sackcloth*, alluding to the Jewish habit, e.g. *2 Samuel*, chap. iii, verse 31: "And David said to Joab, and to all the people that were with him, Rend your clothes, and gird you with sackcloth, and mourn before Abner. And king David himself followed the bier."
7. *cul-de-sac*, from the French; a street which is closed at the farther end, has no exit that way.
8. *as a little child*, cf. *St. Mark*, chap. x, verse 15: "Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein."
9. *Golden Age*, the fabled age of perfect happiness on earth in the far past.
10. *Barrie*, Sir James, born in 1860. Wrote *Auld Licht Idylls* in 1888, and *A Window in Thrums* in 1889. These were followed in 1891 by *My Lady Nicotine* and *The Little Minister*. The year 1903 saw the appearance of his comedies *Quality Street* and *The Admirable Crichton*. *Peter Pan*, that bizarre and tender fantasy, in which Barrie's genius found its characteristic expression, came in 1904. Since then other comedies have appeared at intervals, such as *What Every Woman Knows*, *Dear Brutus*, &c.
11. *mystery play*. The simple plays of the Middle Ages, dealing with religious subjects, were called Mystery Plays, or Miracle Plays. They were based on the life of Our Lord and the legends of the Saints.

③ *Coliseum*, the huge amphitheatre in ancient Rome.

• *Sphinx*, the statue near the pyramids in Egypt. The Sphinx a mythological monster with the head of a woman, wings of a paws of a lion, and a human voice.

• *proxy*, substitute.

Corot (1796-1875), delightful French landscape painter. His is strikingly individual, poetic and æsthetic.

